JEWISH WOMEN'S MAGAZINE

Lilith

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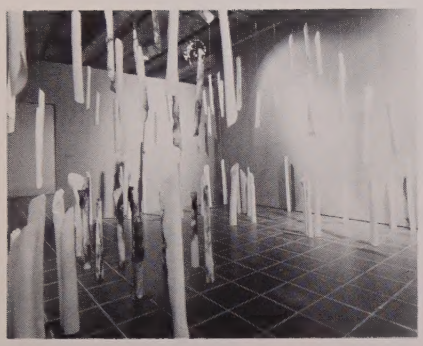
WAS THE WEST LIBERATING FOR JEWISH WOMEN?

BREAKING THE MALE MONOPOLY OF JEWISH COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

RABBI AMY EILBERG ON THE FRONTIERS OF FEMINISM

Left: "Portal," 1982, by Stephanie Weber. (Photo: Marvin Rand)

Below: Bruria's "The Placement of Power," 1984. (Photo: Stephen Merkin)



Above: "Interior," 1984, by Carol Newborg

Right: Shoshana Greenberg's "In the Courtyard of the Ari." (Photo: Jim Lerager)

THE WOMEN'S GALLERY

The Hebrew Union College's Skirball Museum in Los Angeles showcased June 5-August 18 works by four California artists on the theme "Women and Spirituality: Contemporary Visions."

Two of the artists drew on *Kabbala* (Jewish mysticism). **Shoshana Greenberg**'s "In the Courtyard of the Ari" is a room-sized floor installation of modular graphite rubbings made at the Safed synagogue of the 16th century *Kabbalist* Isaac Luria, elaborated with paint and layers of Hebrew and English text.

Bruria's "The Divine Chariot: An Homage to Abraham Abulafia"—an installation of bronze sculpture, paintings and artist-made books—is a visual interpretation of Ezekiel's vision as described by the 13th century *Kabbalist*.

Also on a Biblical theme is **Stephanie Weber**'s "Portal series" of 15 abstract mixed media collages recalling the sacred entry to the Temple. Included, too, was her "Genesis: Lush Life," a celebration of the wonder of God's Creation.

Carol Newborg, too, explores the Jewish interpretation of the sanctification of the place of worship. Her "Sanctuary" is an installation of low-fired clay cylinders suspended by monofilament in an imaginary recreation of Solomon's Temple—which she regards as a means of envisioning herself as a Jewish woman during Temple times.

—Rachel Hallote and A.C.

Cover: Rabbi Amy Eilberg (top); Jaffa family of Trinidad, Colorado (bottom)

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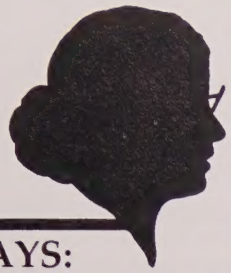
Lilith

THE PREPARED TABLE*

Fall/Winter 1985-86/5746



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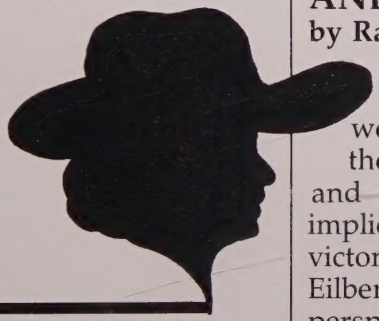
POWER PLAYS: BREAKING THE MALE MONOPOLY OF JEWISH COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP
by Aviva Cantor with Reena Sigman Friedman

LILITH reports from the front lines on women's struggle to wrest power from—and share responsibility with—the men who make the decisions for North American Jews. Based on investigative reports and extensive interviews with women lay leaders and professionals across the nation.



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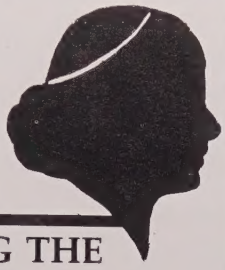
RIDING HIGH: ANNIE OAKLEY'S JEWISH CONTEMPORARIES
by Harriet Rochlin

Was the West liberating for Jewish women? Finally a historian focuses in on the pioneer Jewish women of the American West, revealing how they used their unique historical opportunities to shape their own lives and the embryonic Jewish communities they helped create.

Blanche Colman, first woman to practice law in South Dakota. (photo: Al Alshuler). **Page 14**



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by Raye T. Katz

LILITH interviews Rabbi Amy Eilberg, the first woman to become a rabbi in the Conservative movement, and gets her views on the implications of the ordination victory for American Jews. Eilberg discusses how a woman's perspective and experience may affect the rabbinate and Judaism in general and the conflicts she sees between tradition and feminism in dealing with liturgy and central aspects of Jewish law (such as divorce).

*THE PREPARED TABLE (the *Shulchan Aruch*) is the authoritative code of Jewish behavior according to *halacha* (law). As Jewish feminists continue to rediscover and rework Jewish practice, the contents of *LILITH* may serve as an evolving Prepared Table for a *new code* of behavior.

LILITH is named for the legendary predecessor of Eve who insisted on equality with Adam. *"After the Holy One created the first human being, Adam, He created a woman, also from the earth, and called her 'Lilith.' Adam said, "You are fit to be below me and I above you." Lilith said, 'We are equal because we both come from the earth'."* (From the *Alphabet of Ben Sira, 23a-b).*

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FROM THE EDITORS

The overall theme that emerges in this issue of LILITH is women's pioneering—in the rabbinate, in secular Jewish communal life, and in the early American West.

The news that the Conservative movement would ordain women as rabbis—announced in October 1983—was welcomed jubilantly by LILITH readers as a milestone; this was both an important beginning and the culmination of years of struggle by committed women.

Many of you called LILITH's office, having followed the issue for some time, beginning with our groundbreaking 1977 cover story on the politics of women's ordination.

In this issue we continue our coverage in an interview with Amy Eilberg, the first woman ordained as a Conservative rabbi (page 19). Eilberg's ordination by the Jewish Theological Seminary in the Spring of 1985 created tremendous excitement among Jews and even in the national press. Eilberg discusses here her allegiance both to the tradition and to feminism, and how her feminism has evolved from "equality of access" to what has been called "the feminization of Jewish culture." She also evaluates what progress for women her ordination may prefigure.

Eilberg says in her interview that she believes her ordination represents a call to women's participation in all arenas of Jewish communal life. The struggle for women's access to positions of responsibility and power—both volunteer and professional—in the Jewish community may prove even more difficult than the struggle over women's ordination as rabbis, as our investigative report on women and power in the Jewish community indicates (page 7).

Discussions on women and communal power have been held at the Council of Jewish Federations General Assembly (North America's largest conclave of people in leadership positions, held this November in Washington, D.C.) every year since Jacqueline Levine first broke silence and called for the equality of women at the G.A. in 1972.

Levine and a dozen other women interviewed for the LILITH report make it clear that progress has been accompanied by backsliding. It is especially significant that many of the women interviewed here insisted upon anonymity.

This special report raises important questions: How can individual Jewish women get into positions of power? Will this be good for women in general? Can any progress be made without collective action? Is this a question of "equal access" of individual women to power, or one of the feminization of the Jewish community—a struggle for democracy, egalitarianism and empowerment?

The environment in which we live and work obviously has a profound effect on what we will accomplish, as our photo-essay on pioneer Jewish women of the American West (page 14) convincingly demonstrates. Often when we think of American Jewish women's history we imagine that almost all of our female forebears are represented by the experiences of east-coast urban Jewish women. A whole slice of our history has gone unrecognized until now. In catching us up with the extraordinary lives of the pioneer Jewish women who helped settle the American West, pioneering historical researcher Harriet Rochlin gives us not only biographical sketches but also valuable information about how these women saw themselves, and about the relevance their adventures and accomplishments have for Jewish women today.

LILITH is the grateful recipient of a used office copying machine, thanks to the thoughtfulness of William Zagorski and the generosity of the National Media Group, Inc. has saved us time and money and repeated trips to the local copying store.

To further upgrade our office (which is located in a single room filled with books, mail, typewriters, manuscripts and people), LILITH's staff is looking for an angel who will help us acquire a small *personal computer* or *word processor*. We would be grateful for a grant or gift of $2500 to purchase a machine and printer, which we need desperately in order to reduce our typing and typesetting costs and to improve our office efficiency. OR, if you or anyone you know is upgrading her system and would be interested in donating a previously-owned personal computer to a worthy non-profit organization, please let us know. Of course the gift—whether money or the machine itself—is completely tax-deductible. Please call or write to: LILITH, 250 West 57 St., New York, NY 10019. (212) 757-0818.

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KOL ISHAH

Kol Ishah—"Woman's Voice." Traditionally, the voice of the Jewish woman was not to be heard in public, lest it arouse men. No more. These pages are for news about Jewish women, usually in their own strong voices.

SEMINARY BARRIERS FALL

An historic year in the history of the Conservative movement drew to a close in May with the ordination of Amy Eilberg, 30, of Philadelphia as the first Conservative woman rabbi. Eilberg was among 18 female students who entered the Jewish Theological Seminary's Rabbinical School last fall, comprising some 50% of the incoming class, in keeping with the JTS Faculty Senate's monumental October 1983 decision to open the Rabbinical School to women. [*See p. 19 for interview*]

Eilberg completed the six-year Rabbinical School course in one year because she received credit for courses taken at JTS since 1976. She had completed all the course requirements for a doctorate in Talmud.

The final barrier to Eilberg's entry into the Conservative rabbinate fell last February, when the Rabbinical Assembly, the international organization of Conservative rabbis, passed an amendment to its constitution stating that all graduates of the JTS will automatically become RA members upon ordination. (Previously, graduates had to be accepted individually, by 75% of the delegates voting at an RA convention.) Passed by a vote of 636-267 through a mail ballot of the RA membership, the amendment was proposed to avoid a possible floor fight on Eilberg's acceptance to the RA, according to informed sources.

This concern was based on the RA's rejection of the application of Rabbi Beverly Magidson, ordained by the Reform Hebrew Union College, for the past two years in a row, although the organization does admit male Reform rabbis. The general feeling expressed at the 1984 RA convention was that Magidson's acceptance would have to follow the admission of the first woman Seminary graduate. On March 11, 1985, the RA voted "overwhelmingly" to admit both Magidson and Rabbi Jan Carol Kaufman, who was also ordained in the Reform movement.

The past year has been one of excitement, change and adjustment at the JTS Rabbinical School. "It felt like the place was reeling," Eilberg told the Jewish Student Press Service, describing the first co-ed semester. "The ground was moving beneath our feet."

The women rabbinical students have already made their presence felt. Since they are, on the average, older than their male counterparts, many observers have noted that they bring new perspectives, drawn from their personal and academic experience, to the JTS.

With the enrollment of women rabbinical students has come a second daily *minyan* (prayer service) at the Seminary. The "upstairs" *minyan* is egalitarian and is based on the full participation of women, while the "downstairs" *minyan* does not allow for such participation. In addition, according to JSPS reporter Marlene Goldman, the Rabbinical School curriculum has come under review, with an eye toward expanding its practical component in such areas as psychology, education and counseling, in addition to the traditional emphasis on classical texts.

The presence of women has also raised several profound questions relating to Jewish law and practice. For one thing, the issue of *edut*—women's ability to serve as witnesses in ritual matters—has not yet been satisfactorily resolved by the Conservative movement, leaving many women rabbinical students to grapple with the dilemma on their own.

Several believe that they might not serve as witnesses on Jewish marriage, divorce, and conversion documents out of consideration for individuals within the Jewish community who would consider their signatures, and therefore the documents themselves, invalid. In addition, some first-year women rabbinical students have questioned the need for women aspiring to positions of religious leadership in the Jewish community to "look like men," for example, in the wearing of *tefillin* (phylacteries), during morning services as well as *yarmulkes* (skull-caps).

These and other issues have been under discussion in a support group formed by the first-year women students. Among the topics addressed have been women's self-perception as rabbis, juggling career and family responsibilities, and dealing with opposition.

That opposition to women's ordination remains strong within the Conservative movement is evident from statements issued by the Union for Traditional Conservative Judaism, a group of Conservative rabbis who denounced the recent RA decision as "contrary to Jewish law." Moreover, many JTS faculty members continue to be vocally opposed to women's ordination, although women students report that these professors have not allowed their personal views to interfere with their teaching.

B'NAI B'RITH WOMEN CALL OFF SPLIT

B'nai B'rith Women (BBW) called off in May its decision to leave B'nai B'rith International (BBI). Instead, its top leadership has joined with their counterparts in BBI to "explore alternatives for a productive partnership."

The decision came as a surprise move in the often bitter year-long struggle between the two organizations over BBI's decision to open its membership to women—an action fiercely resisted by B'nai B'rith Women.

The conflict erupted in September 1984, with the passage of a BBI convention resolution calling for the development of a plan for "full and equal membership for women in B'nai B'rith," for consideration at BBI's 1986 convention. The resolution was based on the report of a B'nai B'rith Special Study Committee on Women appointed in 1982.

BBW leaders argued that such a move would threaten BBW's hard-won autonomy as a separate women's organization representing women's special interests. "We felt that having women in B'nai B'rith would be in direct competition with us at the grassroots level, and we would be on a collision course," said President Beverly Davis in a recent interview. "If they kept vying [with us] for the same woman member, this would have eventually diminished the strength of our organization. . . . We're a women's organization with a women's agenda."

Davis was referring to BBW's evolution from lodge auxiliaries in the late 19th century to financial independence and autonomous status by the late 1950s. Today, claiming more than 120,000 members, BBW describes itself as a "Jewish women's service and advocacy organization."

In addition to its major service project—the Children's Home and Group House in Jerusalem (a residential treatment center for emotionally disturbed boys) and its support for the B'nai B'rith Youth Organization, Hillel, and the Anti-Defamation League, BBW has in recent years become an advocate for women's issues.

Priding itself on being the first Jewish women's organization to support ERA, BBW

Beverly Davis, B'nai Brith Women President.

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Rabbi Patricia Karlin-Neumann

has also taken positions in favor of pro-choice legislation, the Economic Equity Act, greater political opportunities for women, greater availability of public and private day care, upgrading the legal status of homemakers, and Social Security and pension reform legislation. BBW also sponsors Operation Stork, a nationwide pre-natal care program aimed primarily at pregnant teenagers.

In the months following the passage of the BBI resolution on the admission of women, BBW's leaders signed numerous petitions and organized 33 "town hall" meetings for members in cities throughout the country, to express their mounting opposition to the plan. On November 12, 1984, BBW's Executive Board voted to call a special International BBW convention to determine the future course of the organization and its relationship with BBI.

In February 1985 BBI President Gerald Kraft told top-level leadership meetings that the admission of women to B'nai B'rith was "non-negotiable" and that BBI would fight separation of BBW by lawsuit, if necessary.

On March 30, 1985, BBW's executive board members, meeting in Washington DC, voted 38-2 (with 2 abstentions) to develop a plan "to terminate its relationship with BBI." The proposal had been scheduled to be presented at a special Delegate Assembly in Chicago June 30-July 1, 1985 and, if approved, presented in final form at BBW's Biennial Convention in Las Vegas, March 1986.

Commenting on the vote, BBW President Beverly Davis told the *Palm Beach Jewish World*, "The idea of integration . . . is no longer the ultimate signpost of equality. The most important aspect of women's rights today is the right of women to be themselves, to have their own identities, and to represent themselves. . . . By breaking away, we will preserve our identity."

Some observers of the dispute expressed the view that the objection of the BBW leaders to the BBI integration plan was rooted in their concern that women entering BBI would not have the same leadership and policy-making opportunities that they currently enjoy in a separate organization. The controversy touches on the entire issue of what sociologist Dr. Rela Geffen Monson calls "The Counterpart System"—the sphere of women's organizations marginal to the Jewish community. (*See article on page 12*).

Kraft reacted angrily to the BBW decision. In his speech to the March 30 BBW Board meeting he declared: "B'nai B'rith will reject and vigorously oppose any disaffiliation. It (separation) is not your decision. We own BBW. BBI has to make a decision whether it will let its organization leave the fold."

Following the March meeting, the issue was discussed in BBW, and there was considerable difference of opinion as to whether separation was a good idea. Some members expressed concern as to whether, as a separate organization, BBW would be able to continue to support BBI programs, and whether separation would weaken B'nai B'rith, said Davis.

On Davis' initiative, meetings of BBW and BBI leaders were held May 8-9 in Washington, resulting in a decision to hold joint negotiations on the organizations' relationship. Negotiations will be conducted by a committee, which will present a preliminary report to the governing bodies of both organizations by December 1985. According to the joint statement, BBW's Executive Board agreed to rescind its resolution favoring separation from BBI in the interim.

SPIRITUALITY CONCLAVE IN L.A.

A variety of grass-roots women's groups have sprouted up in Los Angeles—including groups to observe *Rosh Chodesh* (the New Moon), Passover, *Tashlich* (Rosh Hashanah repentance ceremony), and Shavuot—given impetus by the landmark November 1984 conference, "Illuminating the Unwritten Scroll: Women's Spirituality and Jewish Tradition."

The conference, which drew more than 500 people, "addressed questions relating to the 'second stage' of Jewish feminism, not *halacha* (Jewish law) or equal access, but what is the

nature of women's religious experience, and what will Jewish life, institutions, community, theology, image of God and ritual become as women's experience is taken seriously," according to Rabbi Laura Geller, Director of Hillel-USC, who organized it with Rabbi Patricia Karlin-Neumann, Associate Director of Hillel-UCLA.

The conference was enriched by the diverse viewpoints of broad range of planners, presenters and participants, including Esther Broner, feminist writer; Rachel Adler, Jewish feminist thinker and psychotherapist; Judith Plaskow, theologian; Lawrence Hoffman, liturgy scholar, HUC; Marcia Falk, poet and Associate Professor of Literature, University of Judaism; Blu Greenberg, author; Deena Metzger, poet; Naomi Pollack , director of the Travelling Jewish Theater; and the late anthropolgist Barbara Myerhoff. [*To order conference tapes, see Tsena-Rena.*]

Janet Bieber, Cantor of Temple Beth Ami in West Covina CA and the first woman to officiate at Sabbath services at Sinai Temple, the largest Conservative synagogue in Los Angeles, shares these impressions of the conference:

We gathered from all walks of spirituality to hear our mothers speak, in person, through others, and in our own voices. From Blu Greenberg, a woman born and raised in the Orthodox tradition, to Deena Metzger, who has come back to her Judaism through her own search, we are creating a past through shreds of collected memory, and envisioning a future that redefines our roles in our culture, religion and life-paths.

For some of the women, it took this gathering to awaken the desire to find new places in our culture. For others, who have already blazed a trail for themselves, this conference was a place to find comraderie and the nurturing that comes from knowing that one is not alone. Yes, there are others who feel excluded because God is largely referred to in the masculine, because our protagonists are mostly men, and because all our tefilot *(prayers) are written from a male point of view.*

Where is our story? Between the lines.

*We spent two days together, exploring such diverse subjects as "*Mechitza: *A View from the Other Side," and "The Goddess as Symbol of a New Feminist Holistic Consciousness: Explorations and Meditations." We told stories of our mothers, grandmothers, maiden aunts and legendary ancestors. Nearly everyone remembered a* bubbe *(grandmother) lighting* Shabbos *candles. The silence of the moment just before she struck the match. The torch-like brightness of the flame.*

"Blessed is the match, consumed in the kindling flame."

Her dark face, mostly covered with a scarf, illuminated by the tiny fire.

"Blessed is the flame that burns in the secret places of the heart."

Baruch ata Adonai,

Blessed are you, Source of the Universe.

At the closing session, we made symbolic Torah scrolls, inscribed with names of women important in our lives, and significant spiritual moments from our own experiences. Esther Broner, author and creator of ritual relevant to women's lives, helped us create a new Havdalah *(Post-Shabbat ceremony), as we left our spiritual togetherness and dispersed to our private destinations.*

There is a momentum building in California. It isn't an easy time. Change, evolution, never is. Women are searching for their rightful place in the context of our religion, culture and heritage.

We want to carry out our callings., We want to sing with our God-given voices, hearts, bodies and souls. Horizontal exactitudes, such as rabbinic law, must be balanced by vertical, timeless truths, such as the equality of each living soul before God. Without this, we as a people are in danger of being cut off from our roots, the very wellspring of our life.

May God grant us the power and vision to achieve the balance. Amen.

The conference, made possible by grants from the Jewish Community Foundation of the Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles, and the Max and Anna Levinson Foundation, generated intense excitement among Jewish women in the Los Angeles area, evidenced by the many programs and activities relating to women's spirituality that have been launched in recent months. "We clearly touched a nerve," observed Rabbi Geller.

A four-day "Jewish Women's Spiritual Convocation: *Nishmat Kol Chai* (Spirit of Life)" was held last June 19-23 in Dorena, Oregon, sponsored by women throughout the Pacific Northwest. Participants joined in celebrating *Rosh Chodesh* and Shabbat, and workshops focused on such topics as Jewish family and community, Jewish women's life cycle ceremonies, Torah study and creative prayer, and egalitarianism and Judaism.

"There's a hunger to deal with the question of the spirituality of women and men that I don't think we really understood earlier," said Geller.

ORTHODOX WOMEN'S PRAYER GROUPS

"Even in the best (Orthodox) *shul*, there is still no ritual women can perform if men are in the room." Thus, Rivkeh Haut, a Talmud teacher, explained her motivation in co-founding an Orthodox women's prayer group in Flatbush, Brooklyn. The group is one of several that have sprouted up in recent years seeking to offer Orthodox women more active and direct involvement in Shabbat services.

The women's prayer groups were condemned by five Yeshiva University (modern Orthodox) scholars. Responsa (formal rulings on Jewish law) by Rabbis Herschel Schacter, Abraham Bronspigel, Yehuda Parnes, Nissim Alpert and Mordechai Willig maintained that such prayer groups are prohibited by Jewish law, and are a "total and very apparent deviation from tradition.' The rabbis added that, "all these customs are coming from the movement for the emancipation of women, which in this area is only for licentiousness."

One of the rabbis, quoted anonymously in a February 1985 interview with the Long Island *Jewish World*, complained, "What are they (the women) doing it for? A psychological lift? It has no *halachic* (Jewish legal) meaning. If they want to get their kicks, there are other ways to get it."

Commenting on the responsa, Rivkeh Haut told the *Jewish World*, "I think they're afraid. It's never been done for women to take ritual into their own hands. Before, women couldn't read and understand. Now we're pumped full of education and yet they still expect us to sit passively behind the *mechitzah*" (partition between women and men worshippers).

Moreover, she declared, "They're totally falsifying what we're doing. None of the rabbis bothered to contact us. Members of every group make it very clear it's not a *minyan*" (the ten-member prayer quorum in which, according to traditional Jewish law, only men are counted), and that they assiduously avoid prayers and blessings intended to be recited

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only at official communal worship for which a *minyan* is required.

Haut added that the groups meet only once a month so "we can go (to *shul*) the other three weeks with our husbands." Her Flatbush group, with some 50 regular participants, meets in various living rooms because no Orthodox *shul* will allow the women to meet there. "We would love to rent space [in our own *shuls*] and walk in and out with our husbands," from whom they are separated at prayer, she said.

In late December, partially in response to the rabbis' condemnation, Haut co-founded the Women's Tefillah Network [*see Tsena-Rena for details*]. The primary purpose of the Network, Haut told LILITH, is to encourage the formation of new groups, offer advice, provide Torah scrolls, and teach women the skills necessary to particpate in prayer groups. A secondary goal is to act "as a buffer zone" between the prayer groups and the objecting rabbis. "It's easier to deal with them as a united body," she said.

She explained that, after the women turned to the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) for *halachic* guidelines and were refused, "We had to get together for strength and support. If the rabbis won't help, we'll help each other." This might be the first time in history "that Jews turned to rabbis for *halachic* advice and were refused," she said.

RCA president Louis Bernstein, who had turned to the five Y.U. scholars for an answer to his question about women's prayer groups, has said that the rabbis "don't owe the women anything" by way of explanation of their responsa. The RCA executive council approved publication of the responsa which, although not adopted as official RCA policy, is intended to serve as a "guideline" for Orthodox rabbis.

The dialogue is continuing, however, among Orthodox rabbis, Those who have been supportive of women's prayer groups—among them Rabbi Saul Berman of Lincoln Square Synagogue in Manhattan, and Rabbi Avi Weiss of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale—are expected to issue their own responsa on the subject soon.

Meanwhile, WTN members are continuing their efforts. The Network, comprising representatives from prayer groups throughout the New York area, meets monthly. The organization has received inquiries from women's prayer groups in Denver, Baltimore, Connecticut and California, as well as from a New Orleans rabbi interested in forming a prayer group among women in his congregation. "My real dream," said Haut, "is that every sizeable Jewish community should have women's *davening* (prayer) groups."

—Eve Markewich and R.S.F.

FIRST WOMAN RABBIS IN ISRAEL, US NAVY

The first woman rabbi in Israel—Kinneret Shirion—is performing congregational duties for the Reform movement's Community Synagogue in Ramat Aviv, a Tel Aviv suburb, but without recognition from the Orthodox rabbinical establishment, which does not recognize any non-Orthodox movement or its rabbis.

The Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism said that Shirion, 30, was ordained by the New York branch of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institution of Religion in 1981 and served as a pulpit rabbi in Adelaide, Australia and in Wilton, CT before coming to Israel in 1983. Shirion is married to an Israeli scriptwriter. The couple has a two-year-old daughter.

A rabbinical candidate at the (Reform) Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati will become the first Jewish woman chaplain in the United States Navy after her ordination in the summer of 1986. Julie Schwartz and her husband, Steve Ballaban, also a fourth year student at HUC, will be the first wife-and-husband rabbinic team in the Armed Forces, and have been sworn in as members of the U.S. Navy's Theological Student Program for chaplaincy candidates. (JTA)

WOMAN SOLDIER MURDERED

Hadass Kedmi, a 20-year-old woman soldier from Kibbutz Kfar Masaryk, was murdered some time after she disappeared while hitchhiking near Haifa in November 1984. The chief police pathologist confirmed that she had been raped repeatedly by her captors for about a week before they murdered her. Kedmi's body, bearing marks of violence, was found on Dec. 11 in a wooded area on Mt. Carmel by soldiers on a training exercise.

GOTTLIEB IN N.M.

Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb (subject of cover story, issue #3) has started a congregation called Nahalat Shalom in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The congregation celebrates Rosh Chodesh each month, along with the holidays, and holds bi-weekly Sabbath services. There are also education programs and tutorials for children of various ages.

5TH ANNIVERSARY OF RAPE CRISIS CENTER

Over 100 guests, including medical personnel and representatives of the police, government and various organizations, recently joined in celebrating the fifth anniversary of the Tel Aviv Rape Crisis Center.

The center received praise from MK Shulamit Aloni for its efforts to amend the law concerning the need for corroborating evidence in rape cases. She noted that Israel is one of the few countries in which a man can be punished for raping his wife. Dr. Nitza Shapira-Libai, Advisor to the Prime Minister on the Status of Women, called the center "a corner of warmth and caring in a progressively alienated society."

DIVORCE UP IN ISRAEL

The incidence of divorce in Israel has reached 1.3 per 1,000 citizens and is on the rise, particularly among older couples with children, according to Nitza Ben-Dor, a lecturer at the University of Haifa. Ben-Dor also reported a threefold increase in the number of Israeli single-parent families over the past ten years—up to 12,000 today—89% headed by women.

SOVIET ACTIVIST ON ALIYA

Soviet aliya activist Ina Baruchina, 37, arrived in Israel in March, 1985—six years after she applied for an exit visa from the U.S.S.R., the JTA and *Jerusalem Post* reported. In her eighth month of pregnancy at the time of her arrival, she was accompanied by her husband and two children from a previous marriage.

Baruchina lost her job as a musicologist with a record company when she applied to emigrate in 1979, and since then held a Hebrew language study group in her Moscow apartment. "We lived in constant fear," she said. "We lay in bed at night and every time a car stopped we thought, 'Here comes the KGB'."

NUDEL ILL WITH CANCER

Ida Nudel, the 54-year-old "angel of the refusniks," is suffering from cancer, according to her Israeli sister Ilana Fridman, who spoke to Nudel by phone in July to Bendery, the Moldavian town where she has lived since her return from a four-year Siberian exile term (*see issue #10*).

In a related development, actress Jane Fonda, who visited Nudel in the Soviet Union last year, disclosed that Soviet authorities have harassed Nudel in her efforts to obtain medical care, "once even physically removing her from a train to Moscow where she was to see a doctor." Local officials have also threatened Nudel with a new trial and prison term, Fonda said.

Fonda and Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley issued public appeals in July to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to investigate the conduct of the Bendery authorities, and to allow Nudel to join her sister in Israel. Former U.S. Vice Presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro called on a UJA audience in Toronto in August to take up the case of Ida Nudel. (JTA)

SCHLAFLY SCORES HOLOCAUST EDUCATION PROGRAM

Phyllis Schlafly, the right-wing extremist and anti-feminist, has branded secondary school courses on the Holocaust as child abuse.

Schlafly was inspired to attack the idea of Holocaust teaching when she stumbled onto the activity of that idealistic educational venture, "Facing History And Ourselves: The Holocaust And Human Behavior." With some federal funding and the devotion of extraordinary teachers, a Brookline MA organization has developed a course examining the history of anti-Semitism and the events leading up to Hitlerist savagery. Eighth and ninth graders in both public and private schools now benefit by this instruction.

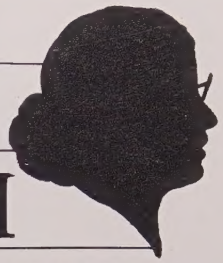
The "Facing History" project, writes Phyllis Schlafly in her recent book *Child Abuse In The Classroom*, is deceitful in design and aims to change young people's attitudes on political and social issues.—Robert Segal (WNS)

ROOTS SOURCES TO BE ACCESSIBLE

Over half of an estimated 100,000 to 500,000 documents accumulated in Russian consulates throughout the U.S. in the late 19th and early 20th century are believed to be case files on Jewish immigrants to the U.S. The docu-

(continued on p. 32)

POWER PLAYS: BREAKING THE MALE MONOPOLY OF JEWISH COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP



BY AVIVA CANTOR

American Jewry is a community which concentrates power in the hands of a relatively few wealthy men and their hired male executives. While there has been a grudging but nonetheless growing willingness in recent years to allow a small number of women superstars to assume positions of responsibility, there has been no shifting of power away from those inter-locking male directorates. The system has accommodated and absorbed these women much the same way prerevolutionary China absorbed invaders.

Rela Geffen Monson, Professor of Sociology at Gratz College in Philadelphia—and the college's first woman full professor—defines power in this context as control over allocations of money raised in the community, and control of its decision-making. Real power, incidentally, should not be confused with its trappings. Many people in the Jewish community, including female organizational leaders, are bought off with *koved*—"honors" such as plaques, participation in top-level briefings, and personal meetings with Israeli leaders—which imply power but are sometimes a substitute for it.

The main power centers in the community are the local Federations (200 in the U.S. and Canada), which raise (through their annual UJA/Federation campaigns) and distribute (via allocations committees) the lion's share of funds contributed by Jews to Jewish causes. At the apex of this pyramid is the national UJA, recipient of about half the campaign funds raised locally.

The other forces in the community are the Council of Jewish Federations (CJF), the Federations' coordinating body; 113 local Community Relations Councils and their overall body, the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council (NJCRAC); the National Jewish Welfare Board (JWB), and the big three "defense" agencies—the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, and the Anti-Defamation League. Most of the religious, Zionist, and defense organizations (minus the American Jewish Committee) also sit on the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, which coordinates political policy decisions.

In this community, there are two ladders to power—how much money you give, as a volunteer ("lay leader"); and your standing as a professional.

What has happened in the past 10-12 years in the Jewish community in terms of women's power as volunteers? Said Jacqueline Levine of West Orange, New Jersey, the first woman chair of the NJCRAC: "The Jewish community treated women as second-rate citizens for years. By the late 1970's, there was more movement, but there are still many places with no women in power positions." (*See "The Volunteer Sphere" in these pages by Reena Sigman Friedman.)*

Monson sees sweeping changes in the Federation picture. "The Federations—the biggest game in town—are more open to women than other organizations, and most boards are integrated," she said. But we are still getting the 'wives of' pattern—women chosen because of their husbands' volunteer roles. A few superwomen are stars. The [male leadership] look around and find a few women and put them on every board."

More women are on boards of the national Jewish organizations than 10,15 years ago, said Ann Wolfe, who served as the American Jewish Committee's National Staff Director of the Committee on the Role of Women and the organization's Social Welfare Consultant. But, she added: "Women are still seen as window-dressing. When it comes to something really important, women are not chosen."

The situation for women professionals is even dimmer. Said Naomi Levine, former Executive Director of the Amer-

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AVIVA CANTOR is Managing Editor of LILITH, *and author of* Bibliography on the Jewish Woman, *a new edition of which is in preparation by Biblio Press. She was a founding member of the Jewish Liberation Project, part of whose program was community democracy. A shorter version of this article was published by* Present Tense *magazine in Spring, 1984.*

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LILITH FRONTLINE REPORT

Sociologist Dr. Rela Geffen Monson, the first woman professor at Philadelphia's Gratz College.

ican Jewish Congress and currently Vice President of External Affairs of New York University: "I have not seen any real progress in the top category in the past ten years. In fact, we're worse off today than ten years ago." (*See "The Professional Sphere" in these pages by Reena Sigman Friedman.)*

In smaller cities when women are given top executive positions in Federations, said Jacqueline Levine, "this is often seen as scraping the bottom of the barrel." The salary differentials between women and men in Federations and their agencies are, in the words of Elaine Winik, president of New York UJA, "awful." Esther Leah Ritz, president of the JWB—a former Federation president in Milwaukee and also a vice president of the CJF—attributed the poor promotional situation in the Federations to their "small universe."

Ritz acknowledged that in the Jewish community center world, there are sometimes salary "discrepancies" but she called them "functions of longevity" and of the fact that many of the women work in nurseries, where jobs tend to be "poorly paid."

Not one woman "surfaced" or was given serious consideration when the American Jewish Committee searched for a new executive director several years ago. Similarly, not one woman was considered for the job Naomi Levine resigned from at the American Jewish Congress in 1977.

Wolfe summed up the situation for Jewish women professionals in these words: "Ten years ago, studies showed everything was ghastly. There were meetings, studies, commissions; personnel directors were informed they should look for women. But in the past year or two there's been a retreat from all the advances made."

Why has there been so little movement, both for volunteers and even less for professionals, in women's achieving positions of power in the Jewish community? The reasons that emerged from extensive interviews fell into these categories: the structure of the community and its criteria for selecting leadership; men's opposition; and women's behavior.

The major factor, of course, is the lack of democracy in the community. In contrast with Jewish communities in Latin America, Canada, and Western Europe, there are no elections in the U.S. Jewish community for leaders who would execute rather than ignore the will of the majority. "With all the talk by Jewish 'leaders' that people should get jobs on the basis of merit, this criterion does not apply in Jewish organizational life," said one observer.

People become Jewish "leaders" not because of brains, good deeds, vision, or commitment but on the basis of the

THE VOLUNTEER SPHERE

In December 1972, Jacqueline Levine, then president of the Women's Division of the American Jewish Congress, called upon the General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations (CJF) to grant women access to the "highest levels of decision-and-policy-making" within the organized American Jewish community. In the nearly 15 years since her milestone address Levine, currently Chair of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council (NJCRAC), maintains that "there has certainly been improvement in the position of women in the lay community, although there is still a long way to go." She pointed to the following data:

- In 1972 only 14% of the people on the board of any Federation or Federation-funded agency were women; today it averages about 40%.
- The latest survey showed that women constituted 25% of Federation Board members, an average 22.7 of Executive Committee members, and an average 19.8% of Campaign Cabinet members.
- 17% of Federation presidents are female—as contrasted with none in 1972. Women have been chosen Federation presidents in Baltimore, Boston, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, New York, Omaha, Toledo and San Jose, among other places.
- There are only four women on UJA's national board. Only four of the 37 "vice-chairmen" are female.

Only three major national organizations have women presidents: NJCRAC with Jacqueline Levine; the National Jewish Welfare Board (JWB) with Esther Leah Ritz of Milwaukee; and (CJF), the umbrella structure for 200 Federations in the U.S. and Canada, with Shoshana Cardin of Baltimore.

Most observers attribute the advances made by women volunteers in recent years to a combination of new economic realities and changing attitudes of both men and women as a result of the feminist movement. Said Sue Stevens, Director of the Women's Division of the CJF: "Ten years ago women were reluctant to admit that they wanted power. Now women have specific goals . . . they are demanding higher positions and they are getting them."

Finally, the critique made by the feminist movement of the entire volunteer structure—which has been charged with relegating women to menial, unrewarding tasks while men perform the "real" work of society (*See "Volunteerism, The Great Debate,"* LILITH #5, 1978)—has led many women volunteers to demand meaningful work in American Jewish organizations. As Jacqueline Levine put it, "It's harder now to get top-ranking volunteers, and equality of treatment is the only way to get them."

Many communal observers predict that as women enter the paid work force in greater numbers, they will occupy more high-level Federation positions, for which the major qualification has long been ability to give and to solicit large-scale contributions. A 1983 report of the Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles pointed out, however, that women still earn "consistently less" than men, and that a family's donation is still assumed to be the man's.

Women's participation has been found to be greatest in smaller communities. A 1980 survey sponsored by the Pittsburgh chapter of the American Jewish Comittee and the National Council of Jewish Women found that while women constitute 28% of Board members of the city's Jewish organizations, men constituted 100% of the executive directors, 96% of presidents, and an average 90% of executive committee members in local organizations with more than 500 members. The Pittsburgh survey also revealed that women often continue to be concentrated in traditionally "female" Federation committees such as education and programming rather than budget or finance. The post of Federation treasurer consistently goes to a man, added sociologist Dr. Rela Geffen Monson.

—Reena Sigman Friedman

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amount of their contributions and their power and status in the general society. Men have wealth and power, and women lack these in sufficient quantity and quality to matter. Men therefore become the community's "leaders."

The size of the contribution matters. Until just a few short years ago, the Major Gifts dinners in one large eastern city did not even admit women, and the dinner menus actually read "Restricted to Men."

But it's not only the money people give that nets them power in the Jewish community. Betsy Ribakoff Gordon of Philadelphia, immediate past chair of the UJA Young Women's Leadership Cabinet, told participants in a recent YWLC retreat that positions of responsibility are "often determined . . . by *access* to money. The person chosen to be campaign chair or Federation president may 'control' major gifts in the community, usually through business. . . ."

Another factor in women's lack of advancement is that the entire promotional system is male, said Rela Geffen Monson. "It's a network of men suggesting other men."

The way the "old-boy network" operates in Jewish organizations derives from how volunteers and professionals inter-relate. Professionals control a lot of the agenda in Jewish life and shape its priorities; the lay people don't have the time and don't stay on for long in specific positions, while the professionals do.

Therefore, while the lay leaders make the ultimate decisions—for example, the Federation president appoints the chairpersons of the campaign (outside New York) and of the allocations committee—the professionals often recommend who gets selected for nominating committees and other lay leadership positions, and who gets trained for leadership. The executive director may even have great influence in who gets chosen as Federation president, and is sometimes more powerful than the president. The executive director is also in charge of administration—hiring and firing.

In the volunteer sphere, said Monson, "there is no broad-based grooming of women for leadership like there is of men." Male Federation leaders in local communities pick other men from Young Leadership groups, recommend them for further training and for the National Young Leadership Cabinet, which is all-male.

Gordon claims that leadership is not being drawn from the Women's Cabinet. "Not one Cabinet graduate—not even a chair—has been invited to become a national officer of the UJA. . . . [Nor has the Women's Cabinet] successfully provided a conduit for our members into the area of decision-making and power at UJA."

The very existence of the Women's

Jane Rogul (*right*), Director of the Women's Division of Israel Bonds. Joyce Arnoff Cohen, long active as a lay leader in New York's Federation and UJA Campaign. (Photo: Isaac Berez)

Shoshana S. Cardin, first woman president of the Council of Jewish Federations(CJF).

Cabinet of the UJA, the Women's Divisions of the UJA/Federation campaigns, and women's auxiliaries generally points up another factor in women's lack of power. Women are "invisible"—they are mostly doing their thing in what sociologist Daniel Elazar called "a segregated environment" which "serves to exclude women from what many regard as the circle of real power and decision-making within the community." (*See article in these pages on "The Counterpart System."*)

In the professional sphere, it is, again, men who do the hiring, and they prefer to hire men.

With men being the leading volunteers and executive directors, and each recommending to and influencing the other as to who gets trained, groomed, hired and promoted, the system, said Ann Wolfe, "is locked in concrete—nothing can move it."

The second factor preventing women from having access to positions of power is the opposition of the men in power, which ranges from passive resistance to outright hostility. Said Wolfe: "The point of view of the men in the organized Jewish community hasn't moved one bit. Most men are comfortable being in power and haven't budged. The most telling sign that Jewish men haven't moved is that in public meetings on issues relating to women, men simply don't show up."

The double standard for choosing female and male leaders also goes beyond the amount of money contributed. Mimi Alperin, who wears two hats at the American Jewish Committee—(volunteer) chairperson of its Interreligious Affairs Committee and member of its Board of Governors, and (professional) Project Coordinator of its Oral History Library—believes "men are asked to participate in terms of the potential amount they will give, but women have to prove themselves first." Men's resistance also appears in the double standard they have toward assertive people. "Women who are very assertive will be criticized, men admired," said Alperin.

Many men go out of their way to treat women, particularly up-and-coming women, in a sexist manner. A professional woman in Los Angeles told a meeting of women volunteers and professionals: "As I walked into this meeting with a female colleague, one of the male department heads in the campaign department chucked me under the chin and said, 'hello, girls'. If you were a man in the leadership and you met me would

In contrast with the significant progress made by women volunteers in recent years, "the situation of women professionals in Jewish agencies is really deplorable," declared Jacqueline Levine.

- There were eleven female executive directors of Federations in the U.S. in 1984, all of them in small cities.
- The first woman executive director of a Jewish family and child care agency in the entire U.S. was appointed in 1984—in Philadelphia.
- There are some women professional directors of local UJA campaigns, and more women locally in middle-management positions but unable to move up.
- Only one major national "coed" Jewish organization—the American Zionist Federation—has a female executive director, Karen Rubinstein.
- There are no women directors of local Jewish Community Relations Councils in large cities.

A 1981 survey of over 2,000 professional staff in 273 agencies, conducted by the Conference of Jewish Communcal Service (CJCS) indicated that, although women constituted over half (58 percent) of the total staff, they made up only 8 percent of executive directors and assistant directors. The great majority of professional women (92 percent) were in the two lower job categories: 32 percent as supervisors and 60 percent as line staff. (*See "The Jewish Establishment is not an Equal Opportunity Employer,"* LILITH #4.)

These findings were corroborated by a 1982 survey of women professionals in New York Jewish agencies, conducted by the New York Federation's Task Force on the Role of the Jewish Woman in a Changing Society. The study concluded that although "a large number of women have been promoted to supervisory and associate executive positions over the past three years . . . much greater percentages of women than men work in the lower two professional levels of employment."

The survey also revealed that there was not one female executive director of Jewish family and children's services, senior citizen agencies, education, health and rehabilitation, youth, vocational, fund-raising agencies—or of the Federation itself. The cover of the report revealingly listed *"Mrs. Laurence A. Tisch"* as Federation president.

Stephen Solender, Executive Director of the Baltimore Jewish Federation, told participants at a 1984 CJCS meeting that "we are not yet an equal opportunity employer. . . . Because of antiquated attitudes and time-worn prejudices, we . . . are severely underutilizing the abilities and skills that women can offer professionally in Jewish communal service."

THE PROFESSIONAL SPHERE

A major impediment to women is that fear that the influx of women professionals into Jewish communal service will lead to a devaluation of the field. This is similar to the fear—so far unsubstantiated—voiced in 1973 by sociologist Daniel Elazer. He argued that "the increase in opportunities for women is likely to further reduce the presence of men in synagogue activities . . . and could further enhance the image of Judaism as 'women's work,' i.e., less important. . . . This image will be further enhanced even in light of the thrust toward greater acceptance of women as equals."

—Reena Sigman Friedman

you trust me with your money, or would you look upon me as a person with the credentials to help in the development of a campaign?"

Men's resistance to women's advancement also takes the form of excuses, particularly in the case of professional women, such as these: "It's tough for newcomers to break in" (when there were many competent women already in that field, waiting to move up); "women don't want to work at night" (an oldie but goodie); and, professional women, unlike men, lack "mobility"—they are less likely than men to leave town if a better job beckons. This mobility argument was also advanced by CJF president Shoshana Cardin and JWB president Esther Leah Ritz ("to move up you need to move away").

A very specific case of men's resistance concerns Orthodox men. Said Ritz, who was president of her Jewish community center and her Federation in Milwaukee: "If you're a Jewish woman in leadership, sooner or later you run into problems with the Orthodox. They are not accustomed to dealing with women in decision-making relating to their activities."

Several leaders feel that some behavior of women, both volunteer and professional, is an impediment to their advancement. Said Alperin: "Men campaign for positions, women don't. Men say, 'I want to be on—Commission: how much will it cost?' Women expect something only in return for services rendered."

Ritz talked about some of the problems women have had once they're in powerful positions. In Milwaukee, she said, "we put more and more women on committees, but women treated them as study groups. We finally told them, 'you're there to get information to make decisions, not for your own fulfillment.' This had been a carry-over from activity in women's organizations—what decisions do you make in Hadassah: who will run the bake sale?—but this behavior is tending to disappear."

One of the great problems, said Ritz, is women who "limit their own sights because they don't want to compete with men." In the same interview, however, she said she had advised women executives, at a CJF meeting, not to "look too eager" to move up.

Shoshana Cardin believes that a woman who wants a top executive position must be "committed to lead that kind of life." She pointed to three women in Baltimore who left top executive positions in the past three years to start families. "Their vertical career mobility will be hampered" by this decision, she said.

Jacqueline Levine, asked to comment on these reasons put forth for women's lack of professional advancement had but one thing to say: "I don't believe in blaming the victim."

Much has been made in recent years of "networking"—women helping other women to get ahead. In the Jewish community, however, women volunteers don't always help other women volunteers; women professionals don't always help other women professionals; and most significant, women volunteers certainly don't go out of their way to help women professionals.

Monson feels it is necessary to get a "critical mass—15 to 20% of women—on nominating committes to nominate other women to insure continuity." But, as several women pointed out, unless these women are "sensitized," they might not be helpful to other women. Some women volunteers resent others—especially younger women—moving up fast behind them.

Women professionals don't seem to be reaching out to each other either. Some are apprehensive about getting together, comparing salaries and work histories, and afraid to raise issues of discrimination, even among themselves, because, in the words of one professional, "each is afraid she is not being promoted because it's *her* own lack of ability—just like with sexual harassment on the job, when each woman felt it was her own fault."

In some organizations, such as the UJA, people have such fear of losing

LILITH FRONTLINE REPORT

Esther Leah Ritz, the first woman president of the National Jewish Welfare Board, is a past president of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation.

Susan Kuzon (Springfield, Mass.) and Marcy Feldman (Detroit), members of the Executive Committee of the UJA's Young Women's Leadership Cabinet.

Ann Wolfe, retired national affairs specialist at the American Jewish Committee, who held one of the first professional women's-issues portfolios in the community, feels there has been a retreat in recent years from previous gains women have made.

their jobs that they don't even meet with each other. Nor are there, as a rule, organizational vehicles for city-wide meetings of women professionals in the Jewish field. One such meeting was organized a short while ago in Washington, D.C. "After the meeting, the women were so afraid that they all reported about it to their superiors. They were ordered never to go to any such meeting again and they never did," said a woman professional in that city.

Both Naomi Levine and Jacqueline Levine (no relation) favor affirmative action, which Jacqueline Levine stressed does not mean quotas as some people in the Jewish community believe or prefer to believe. It means, she said, ensuring that the best-qualified women will be in the running, scouting around in a wide field, and doing as much as possible to see that women are better trained.

Naomi Levine believes that professional women within an agency should get together, study and compare male and female salaries, jobs and promotions and then discuss affirmative action plans with the agency's head. If no action has been taken within a certain agreed-on period, she continued, the women should be prepared to resort to the legal process.

Over the years, there have been many rumors of women professionals in Jewish organizations gathering material on their organization's discriminatory practices, preparatory to a lawsuit before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). None of these putative lawsuits have ever gotten behind the gestation period. "Women are unsure, frightened, hopeful things will happen in time—and not prepared to fight," said Naomi Levine.

"The Jewish woman grows up with the values of helper rather than leader. Many women feel they are working for their commitment, and are conflicted over fighting for what they deserve," said Evan Bayer, director of field operations, American Jewish Congress. Others, hired in mid-life at lower salaries than men after working as volunteers (a

Most of the Jewish community is organized according to a "counterpart" system in which the main organization is the men's and there is a women's auxiliary. The main board of the organization is a men's board, with the women's auxiliary generally having one slot on it.

This system obtains for all the major religious organizations—Orthodox, Conservative, Reform; the B'nai B'rith, with its B'nai B'rith Women; American ORT Federation, with Women's American ORT; the Jewish Labor Committee; and various fund-raising organizations from Israel Bonds to Brandeis University's Women's Committee. The national UJA has a Women's Division, as do the local Federation/UJA campaigns (fund-raising drives).

Women, however, sit on most Boards and committees of local Federations and their agencies. The Boards of the big three "defense" agencies are integrated by gender, as are local community relations councils, smaller national organizations with left-wing or pro-feminist backgrounds, and the Reconstructionist movement.

There are also the Big Three independent women's organizations: Hadassah, the National Council of Jewish Women, and Pioneer Women.

THE COUNTERPART SYSTEM

The UJA and the UJA/Federation campaign leaders like their Women's Divisions because they think they encourage what is called "plus giving." This term means the "extra" amount a woman contributes over and above her husband's donation—

one. The plus-giving theory is based on the assumption that a husband will decide to give $50,000 and a wife "add on" another $5,000, thus netting the UJA $55,000—$5,000 more than they would have harvested without the woman's being solicited by the Women's Division. It assumes, too, that a couple does not make money decisions together, for example, to give a total of $55,000 as a couple.

The phenomenon of women's taking paying jobs in great numbers has not led to a push to mainstream them into the trade campaign divisions. What has happened is the establishment of "business and professional" women's groups *within* the campaign's Women's Divisions in order to bolster them.

Women's auxiliaries are "safe havens" for many women who want to do good work but who don't want to change their lives. Many volunteer women leaders justified the Women's Divisions in the altruistic terms of how they help the campaign and the Jewish people it serves, and bring the campaign into the home. Sociologist Dr. Rela Geffen Monson, however, doubted whether this altruism will carry onto the next generation of women who, she said, "will want to be in the Federation like the men—for business contacts."

Jane Rogul, National Director, Israel Bonds Women's Division, sees the divisions as essential vehicles for "bridging the gap between the men and the women, as only the Women's Divisions are aware of where the women are and how they can gain their maximum involvement in ways defined differently than they have been in the past."

Many women active in Women's Divisions of the UJA/Federations campaigns regard them as "access routes," in Council of Jewish Federations (CJF) president Shoshana Cardin's words, rather than dead-ends, claiming that the majority of women on Federation boards across the country came up from the Women's Divisions. Actually, the women who have made it through—and out of—the Women's Divisions tend to be women who have leadership roles in other communal organizations as well.

Sue Stevens, director of the CJF Women's Division, reports that, at the request of their members, Women's Divisions in many communities currently sponsor leadership development programs designed to move women in and out of the Divisions into the general community. The courses train women in specialized skills such as public speaking, budget-planning, and employee relations.

Monson believes that the Women's Divisions can play valuable roles if they serve as advocates for women on such issues as abortion rights and Jewish divorce law, and put pressure on Federations to hire women in executive positions. But she basically believes that as long as the "counterpart" organizational system exists, women will be unable to achieve equality.

Calling the women's auxiliaries "vestiges of another generation," Monson said that "as long as [they] exist, women are kept out of the minimum amount of power necessary for impact." Naomi Levine, former executive director of the American Jewish Congress concluded: "There is no such thing as separate and equal. Separation breeds a kind of inequality."

—R.S.F. and A.C.

current practice in many social service agencies), are not sure they *do* deserve more.

The key importance of the volunteer leaders' involvement in helping advance women professionals was stressed by both volunteers and professionals. Said one volunteer: "More and more women volunteers have to put themselves on search committees; of course, this does not necessarily mean they will be positive to the hiring of women." Volunteer women, said one professional, "are usually not accepting of women executives—they are threatened by them."

In fact, the relationship between women volunteers and professionals often assumes the dimensions of a class struggle—inchoate and undeclared as it may be—fought in the psychological arena. The volunteer women, all upper and upper-middle class, both look down upon *and* envy the women who work for a living. The (middle class) professionals both look down upon and resent the volunteers. Sometimes, to avoid the entire inevitable struggle, women volunteers hire male executives.

Naomi Levine feels that "most volunteers are not concerned about advancing professional women—they don't feel that secure in their own positions to rock the boat." One professional cited the response of women volunteer leaders to a case of Jewish men's social club discrimination in a large coastal city. The Jewish women lawyers went to the local Community Relations Council, which referred them to the Federation. "The women at the Federation said the issue was trivial. Some women said, 'If you go after these clubs, we'll lose financial support from the men'."

By far the greatest complaint is the lack of interest on the part of women volunteer leaders in what is happening with professionals on the staffs of their own organizations. One leader in a local UJA/Federation campaign pointed to the "good working relationship between volunteers and professionals" in her organization. A woman professional, formerly with that same organization, said bitterly of that volunteer and another top woman leader: "—and—were both heads of [that organization]. When they came in, the women were underpaid; and when their terms were up, the women were still underpaid. They didn't change anything for women."

Naomi Levine feels it is important to reach out to and mobilize support of women on the boards and ask for assistance. But—and this is a big but—the thrust must come from professionals, she said, and the prerequisite is their becoming "more aggressive, and fighting for what they want."

What is going to "budge" men to equalize power, both for professionals and for volunteers, is a "much more revolutionary push by the women," said Ann Wolfe. "What happened with anti-Semitism? Jews started to fight. What happened with the Blacks? A revolution went on. The same thing will have to happen in the Jewish community for these issues to get solved," she concluded. "You are not going to do it by holding nice conferences."

In the final analysis, the issue comes down to the old question of what is the goal of the outsiders' group—a bigger slice of the pie or a different pie.

If the community continues the way it is, more and more wealthy and bright women will be allowed to rise to positions of limited power—if they play according to the rules of the game. This will not only exclude the capable women who refuse to play by these rules. It will also select in favor of women who will have to act to reinformce the system that enabled them to rise, in order to remain in their positions. With their goals—and methods—the same as those of the male power structure, they will not be willing or able to change the system from within.

The time has come to acknowledge that not only can the system not be changed from within, but that it is not worth salvaging and changing; and that only a completely different system—egalitarian, democratic, open to people and ideas—can meet the needs of a community that wants to survive, flourish, and fulfill its potential. ■

RIDING HIGH

ANNIE OAKLEY'S JEWISH CONTEMPORARIES

BY HARRIET ROCHLIN

The first Jewish woman in what is now the American West, while still nameless, may be described as a secret Jew in flight from the Inquisition, first in her Iberian homeland, and then in colonial Mexico.

In the late 1590's or early 1600's, she and her Sephardic co-religionists sought refuge in the northern wilds of New Spain—now the American Southwest. Other secret Jews followed, leaving embedded in early Texas and New Mexico pockets of Jewish life that remained hidden long after the Spanish reign ended in 1821.

During the Mexican period (1821-1848), Jews, an occasional woman among them, trickled onto the Western frontier from the United States. Already disliked as intrusive gringos, they were loathe to admit they were also Jews.

It was not until the Americans seized control in 1848 and threw the West open to all comers, that Jews surged westward by the hundreds, then thousands. During the tempestuous early years, Jewish women, while scarce, were on hand, and in greater numbers than is generally supposed.

As early as fall 1850, a San Francisco-based reporter noted: "Mesdames Keesing, Berg and Simon decorated the Masonic Hall on Kearny Street for High Holy Days services," and "much pleasure was felt at the cheering presence of many dark-eyed daughters of Judah."

Another firsthand report, this one from Abraham Abrahamsohn, a certified *mohel*, corroborates the impression. He claimed that he earned a handsome living in California in 1852 performing circumcisions. Recalled Abrahamsohn: "The Jews in (gold-rush) San Francisco rivalled in increase their ancestors in Egypt."

By 1885, an estimated 6,000 Jews had reached California. Half had settled in the instant metropolis of San Francisco. The other 3,000 had lighted in pueblos and outposts from San Diego to Eureka. Men still greatly outnumbered women, but Jewish families were visible everywhere.

Josephine Sarah (Josie) Marcus (1861-1944). A native of San Francisco, she ran away with a theatrical troupe at 18, and spent 50 years roaming the West with her husband, one-time Tombstone sheriff Wyatt Earp. (Photo courtesy J. Eduardo Robinson, Sonora, Mex.)

As gold waned in California in the late 1850's, mineral strikes elsewhere in the West attracted seekers—Jews among them. By 1880, some 25,000 to 35,000 Jewish men and women—American, German, English, Polish, Russian—were living in burgeoning cities, supply towns and mining camps from the Rockies to the Pacific.

Granted equal standing in their polyglot frontier communities, they energetically applied the entrepreneurial and homebuilding skills they had brought with them. Free to do whatever needed doing, these early pioneers speedily branched out into new pursuits unique to the developing West—mining, agriculture, land development, road and railroad building, public office. Aware that their personal well-being depended on the economic and social growth of their community, and eager to exercise their rights and responsibilities as first-class citizens, many Jewish settlers—men and women—became avid pioneer town builders.

Between 1881 and 1912, a still larger Jewish influx helped swell the Western Jewish pioneer core to nearly 100,000. These later pioneers were refugees fleeing violent anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe, and later, overcrowding, unemployment, and disease in the East Coast cities.

Unlike earlier pioneers, who tended to be footloose until they had a toehold, the Eastern Europeans usually emigrated in families. They also arrived in greater numbers, were poorer and more insular. During this period frontier opportunities were diminishing; immigration was increasing; and the Western welcome was wearing thin, especially for foreigners. Even well-established Jews were experiencing some social exclusion. In response to these conditions, most later pioneers gravitated to urban centers seeking jobs, not bonanzas.

Like most women who helped settle

HARRIET ROCHLIN is the author of the widely-acclaimed Pioneer Jews: A New Life In the Far West, *an illustrated social history and the first region-wide study on Jews in the West (Houghton Mifflin 1984). Her novel,* So Far Away *(Jove, 1981) is a fictional treatment of Jewish life in the early West with a woman as protagonist. It is currently being distributed by Biblio Press (POB 22, Fresh Meadows, NY, 11365). Rochlin was one of 50 presenters at the "Women's West 1984" conference (held in Park City, Utah), which focused on the Western experience as a liberating force in women's lives.*

New York-born Bertha Frank Meyers, who came to Cheyenne, Wyoming in 1873 as a young bride, became a leader in her community. She was an avid horseback rider and bicyclist as well. (Photo courtesy Lyman Spaulding, Cheyenne)

the West, the majority of Jewish women arrived as dependents—wives, daughters, sisters, nieces—moving West as often by force or duty as by choice.

Fanny Hyman arrived in Portland in 1858 in the hands of Nathan Cohen, who had held her captive for four months until she agreed to marry him. Upon arrival, she sought the protection of her uncles and got a divorce. The parents of 18-year-old Adele Maas of Wiesbaden, Germany, married her off to Israel Katz, a Port Townsend, Washington, merchant twice her age. But it was Russian-born Anna Rich Marks who persuaded her mild-mannered English husband to accompany her to the Utah Territory, where she earned a reputation for having a fast draw, a nasty tongue, and a shrewd entrepreneurial mind.

Helpless pawn or self-determining protagonist—they ran the gamut—these pioneer Jewish women, like their gentile counterparts, continued to rely on a male relative or his surrogate for a livelihood, protection and respectability. Even those who fended for themselves, with rare exceptions, maintained the illusion of reliance on a nearby male. Victorian propriety was not their sole incentive.

Life in the vast and remote early West was genuinely harsh and perilous, especially for women. Whether early or later arrivals, city or frontier dwellers, all faced certain inescapable hardships.

Wrenched out of older American and European centers—often homogeneous shtetls (townlets) and ghettos—they made arduous treks, seemingly to the end of the earth. At their destinations, their survival depended upon a speedy adjustment to a radically different climate and terrain, unfamiliar food and customs, and a bewilderingly open and diverse society.

Harder to withstand than the demands of daily life were the catastrophes that regularly rained down on everyone: fires, floods, epidemics, outlaw attacks. No less devastating were the economic vicissitudes. Minerals ran out; extended droughts ruined agricultural districts; entrepreneurial and government policymakers favored a rival town for their facilities.

Many settlers had to start afresh in two or three locations before they rooted. Esther Levy spent 25 years moving around the frontier with her husband Aaron. She kept house in Frenchy Gulch and San Francisco, California; Sitka, Alaska; and Genesee, Idaho, before the family finally settled in Seattle in the 1890's.

Still, all was not travail for these women. Within a few years or a few decades, most pioneer Jewish families achieved middle class—in some cases elite—standing in communities they had helped build. But a sundrenched single-family home or even a gated estate were not the new region's only reward.

By the 1860's and 1870's women in the less tradition-bound West began to accrue more social and political rights than their sisters had in older America and Europe. Public schools—one-room to universities—from inception were co-educational.

Women suffragists also found Western legislators more responsive to their cause. Wyoming, Colorado, Idaho, and Utah were the only states to pass women's suffrage laws in the 19th century. By 1914, Washington, California, Nevada, Oregon, Montana, and Arizona had followed suit, before any of the nation's first 30 states enacted similar legislation.

Yet not all Jewish women benefited equally from opportunities. Affecting their ability to respond were a string of givens: national origin, socio-economic background, religious leanings. Add to the above disparities in intelligence, education, physical and emotional strength, and temperament, and it is hardly surprising that the Western experience hampered one woman and sped another.

In every stage of the pioneer period, some women were beset with miseries as great as any they or their mothers had suffered in their home communities. Grinding poverty, overwork, physical abuse, abandonment—intensified by hardships unique to the West—drove some to madness or suicide.

In the early 1890's, San Franciscan Bessie Wolf, daughter of a Polish glazier, married Russian-born merchant Jacob Isaacson. Bessie bore six children in approximately 10 years. With her husband off peddling goods in Arizona mining camps much of the time, she was left to manage as best she could. A few days after the birth of her sixth child, Bessie, poor and despondent, threw herself into San Francisco Bay. She was rescued by police and then released. Several days later she swallowed carbolic acid and died.

Many more pioneer women grew stronger with every test, progressing from struggling newcomers to esteemed townswomen in a decade or two. Memorable among these was American-born Anna Zucker Nathan, who rode in a wagon with her husband—their baby in her arms—from Leavenworth, Kansas to California Gulch, two miles high in the Rockies, site of the first major gold strike in Colorado.

In 1865, with gold on the wane in California Gulch, Anna and Simon Nathan—by then the parents of five children—trekked over a rugged mountain range to Old Fort Pueblo in the Pueblo Valley, where they ranched and ran a small store. There, the Nathans' baby daughter was kidnapped by Indians and When the men were out on a round-up, Anna took pains to conceal from the Indians that she was alone and unprotected. At milking time, she crawled to the barn and returned on her hands and knees, pulling the pails behind her.

As Pueblo began to take shape as a town, Anna accumulated communal firsts. She brought the first tin bathtub to town; also the first piano—for her

Jews such as the Jaffa family of Trinidad, Colorado, settled all over the American West. Many of the women in these families gained strength and a measure of independence as they dealt with primitive living conditions and prevailing violence. (Photo courtesy American Jewish Archives, HUC-JIR Cincinnati)

daughter, a member of the first high school graduation class. She and her husband organized Temple Emanuel, the first Jewish congregation in Pueblo.

Some pioneer Jewish women started boardinghouses, restaurants, hotels, and stores. In 1876, Anna Freudenthal Solomon and her husband Isadore Elkan settled on a sparsely inhabited, mosquito-ridden site near the San Simon River in the Southeastern Arizona Territory. There, I.E. manufactured charcoal, and Anna—while housekeeping and tending three children—started a general store. She later reminisced:

"We had no furnishings, no cook stove, and not anything else that belongs to the comfort of the human race. . . . My baby was sick and I had the chills and fever for two years, but that did not hinder us from doing a great deal of business."

After three more offspring were born in what became known as Solomonville, Anna undertook still another enterprise, the Solomon Hotel, which quickly became the best-known hostelry between Tucson and El Paso.

Some of these businesses grew into commercial empires. More widely known now than in Mary Ann Magnin's heyday is the chain of fine apparel stores—I. Magnin—that grew out of the modest carriage trade shop she and her husband Isaac started in San Francisco in 1871. From its inception, the store's driving force was Mary Ann, who, besides being the mother of eight, was a brilliant merchandiser who prided her-

woolly West.

More legendized than memorialized were a few wayward types. In 1880, Josephine Sarah Marcus—Josie—ran away from her proper San Francisco family. In Tombstone, Arizona Territory, her relationship with her lover having gone sour, Josie hooked up with Wyatt Earp, the town marshal. After the notorious shoot-out at O.K. Corral on October 26, 1881, Josie and Wyatt left town. They spent nearly 50 years together, roaming the West with other high-living drifters—gamblers, prospectors, and promotors.

Ida Levy operated a brothel in the early 1900's in the mining town of Butte, Montana. Her in-the-black business practices—and her excellent Jewish cooking—were remembered by many. As was her practice of ceasing operations from sundown to sundown every Yom Kippur.

In Butte during the same years, a woman who called herself Jew Jess—a prostitute, drug addict and pickpocket—was also racking up a record. She was repeatedly hauled into court for rolling customers. On one occasion, after talking herself out of a sentence, Jess gratefully embraced the judge, then vanished. His Honor soon noted that his watch and tie clasp had vanished, too.

Jewish women willing to deliver babies, nurse the sick, and see to the destitute were rewarded with folk-heroine soubriquets: "Angel of the Camp"; "Mother Mercy"; "Queen of Charities."

Therese Marx Ferrin, an early Tucson settler, was trained in Germany in herbal and natural remedies. She treated the ailing on her own and went on rounds with pioneer physician Dr. John Handy. Midwife Mary Kobey, wife of an Orthodox rabbi, devoted her days to assisting the poor, Yiddish-speaking immigrant women in Denver's West Colfax of the 1880's and 1890's. She delivered their babies and often stayed on to care for the family until the mother was back on her feet.

The most widely recognized of these "Angels" was Frances Wisebart Jacobs. When her family moved to Denver from Colorado City in 1876, she made the sick and the poor of that exploding city her primary concern. A stirring speaker and a gifted leader, Jacobs devoted much of her time to organizing pioneer health care and social services. The Frances Jacobs Memorial Hospital, renamed the National Jewish Hospital for Consumptives, and the Charity Organization Society, forerunner of Denver's Community Chest, were among them.

But she spent even more time personally ministering to the needy: bringing them food, clothing and medicine; the disheartened and chiding the errant.

For her pioneer work in health and social services in Colorado, Jacobs was selected to be one of 16 pioneers—and the only woman—depicted in stained glass in the rotunda of the state capitol in Denver.

By the late 19th and early 20th century, young Western Jewish women were assuming social, civic and occupational responsibilites undreamt of by their female forbears. They became civic activists in droves. Some worked in interdenominational kindergartens, women's and children's clinics, old-age homes. Second-generation wives of successful Jewish business and professional men—such as Rosalie Meyer Stern, San Francisco; Seraphine Pisko, Denver; Emily Schwabacher, Seattle—played stellar roles in developing their city's cultural and philanthropic life.

Others concentrated on strengthening Jewish programs and facilities operated by increasingly vital synagogue and temple sisterhoods. Western chapters of the National Council of Jewish Women, founded in 1893, also provided a rallying ground for young, well-educated and progress-minded women.

Western Jewish women had also begun seeking paid employment and higher education. Some in each community spent their years between graduation and marriage as school teachers; others—mostly single women and widows—made education a lifelong vocation. Jeannette Lazard, Mina Norton, and Mina Mooser taught in Los Angeles; Claire Ferrin, in Tucson; Elsie Myers (a Vassar graduate), in Cheyenne.

Still others made bold leaps into innovative male-dominated careers.

- Rachel "Ray" Frank, born in San Francisco in 1864, became a Jewish educator, a journalist, and a widely-sought lecturer advertised as the "female rabbi" and "modern-day Deborah."
- Bella Rosenbaum of Seattle was

Hattie Ferrin, the first Jewish girl born in Tucson — in 1879, when it was still in the Arizona Territory—graduated from the University of Arizona's School of Mining in 1898. (Photo courtesy Arizona Historical Society)

Washington State (1901).

- Blanche Colman, a native of Deadwood, was the first woman to practice law in South Dakota (1911).
- Dr. Adele Solomons Jaffa of San Francisco graduated medical school in 1893 and became a trailblazing child psychiatrist.
- Jessica Peixotto was the second woman to receive a Ph.D. (1900) and the first woman to be granted a full professorship (1918) from the University of California. Her field was Social Economics.
- Journalist Belle Fligelman of Helena campaigned with suffragist leader Jeannette Rankin to make Montana the 11th state to grant women the vote (1914). When Rankin became the first woman elected to the United States Congress (1917), Belle went to Washington D.C. as her aide.
- Second-generation Westerner Florence Prag Kahn was the first Jewish woman elected to the United States Congress. She served as aide to her husband, Rep. Julius Kahn of San Francisco, from 1898 until his death in 1924. She was appointed to fill his seat, then was re-elected six times.

Was the early West liberating for Jewish women? The scope of a history that spans more than 300 years, covers the western third of the United States and involves thousands of women, negates a single, all-encompassing answer. Reflecting on the individuals and groups presented here causes new questions to proliferate.

- *Quantitative questions:* In actual numbers, how many Jewish women pioneered in the West? What were their residential, marital, and reproductive patterns?
- *Comparative questions:* How did their advance compare with that of non-Jewish women in the West? With Jewish women elsewhere? Did their female descendants continue to pioneer or did they retreat to less challenging spheres?
- *Ethnic questions:* What can these women teach us about Jewish life in an open society? Did they contribute to the maintenance and modernization of Judaism west of the Rockies?

Given the relevance of these questions to the contemporary Jewish life, it is likely that these issues will be studied at length. For now we have this growing record, studded with little-known Jewish personalities and historic and everyday events—all propelled by the *zeitgeist* of hope for more social and political rights, material gain, healthful and pleasurable living.

We can drop this reclaimed past on a shelf in the Old Curiosity Shop—or we can use it to fuel our own quests. As true for us as for our female pioneer predecessors, much depends on each woman's readiness to make use of the opportunities at hand. ■

EXPLORING THE LINK BETWEEN WOMANHOOD AND THE RABBINATE: *LILITH* INTERVIEWS THE FIRST WOMAN ORDAINED IN THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT

BY RAYE T. KATZ

LILITH: As of June, 109 women have been ordained as Reform and Reconstructionist rabbis. What do you think is the reason for the excitement—in the press and generally—about *your* ordination as the first woman Conservative rabbi? Is it due to the Conservative movement's being viewed differently?

EILBERG: Someone said to me recently that when the Episcopalian Church decided to ordain women, *that* engendered a degree of excitement that in some way surpassed the earlier decisions of the more liberal churches. There's a set of expectations that in the more right-wing religious bodies there still is religious inequality for women. So when women are allowed to move forward *there*, that is very significant—it affects everyone. There's hope for all of us, and there's hope for all of our aspirations. The degree of media and community attention also conveys the sense that there's work left to be done. If feminism were a closed issue, if we were an egalitarian society, then this kind of event would not engender such excitement. People's excitement seems to be directly related to their own sense of denied aspirations or frustrations along the way, so that another woman's achievement gives women hope in their own struggles.

LILITH: What has happened in the community in the past 12, 13 years to cause the momentous event of your ordination to take place?

EILBERG: I think it was a gradual process of the community's opening its eyes to the fact that while there is still work to be done, women are substantial partners in the society in which we live. The Jewish feminist movement placed the issue on the agenda of the Jewish community and raised the question, "do you really want Jewish society to lag so far behind the general society in which we live?" We as a community gradually came to the conclusion that, if anything, we were proud that our Jewishness represents a progressive, ethical outlook, and we had to deal with the fact that the Jewish community seemed to be adopting an inferior ethical stance with reference to the equality of its women.

Those pockets of the community that are still in opposition will be the next educational target. It is now acceptable if not normative practice in the Conservative movement for a woman to serve as a *shaliach tzibur* (leader of the prayer service) . . . and to be called to the Torah for an *aliya* (saying blessings). That doesn't mean that every congregation permits these practices, or that in congregations that do, it is universally ac-

Rabbi Amy Eilberg, the first woman ordained as a Conservative rabbi by the Jewish Theological Seminary, May 1985. This brings to 110 the number of women ordained as rabbis by the Reform, Reconstructionist, and now the Conservative movements. Eilberg, 30, has become chaplain at Methodist Hospital, Indianapolis, a decision related to her hope that among the primary concerns of women rabbis will be caring and interdependency. (Photo: Joyce Culver)

RAYE T. KATZ, educator, studied Talmud with her father, an alumnus of the (pre-World War I) Volozhin Yeshiva.

cepted. It is as if the Supreme Court has now spoken, but society still has a long way to go in terms of accepting this practice more fully.

Just on the apparently simple level of people getting used to the fact that there is such a thing as a woman rabbi—"what does she look like, and can she really read Torah, and can she really have a baby and be a rabbi?"—there is work to be done. These questions that seem very simple represent people's profound fears and resistance to change.

I was at a meeting of a group of people who have a traditional egalitarian minyan (quorum of worshippers). One of the feminists in the group suggested a couple of minor changes in reference to God-language. I expected some of the men to oppose her suggestion on grounds that it is against *halacha* (Jewish law). The responses that were voiced, though, were: "We cannot make those kinds of changes *ever*, because God in the Jewish religion is male, and the language is accurate in reflecting that." Now *that's* the sort of thinking we have to struggle against.

LILITH: How do you feel about changing sexist God-language?

EILBERG: I am in deep conflict about it at this point. I have a very strong commitment both *halachic*ally and emotionally to the traditional liturgy. I have been praying the words of this traditional liturgy literally every day for the past 15 years and somewhat less regularly for more years than I have memory of. Traditional Judaism is a very important part of my life. My connection to the traditional liturgy—which represents in many ways the chain of tradition between me and my Jewish forebears—is very strong. I have great allegiance to the *halachic* system, as well. I approach the question of liturgical change with great trepidation and great care. There would be a sense of loss for me—loss of that sense of continuity and that sense of allegiance—if I were to begin to change the language with which I pray.

On the other hand, I am beginning to feel very strongly that God-language is very much both a reflection of *and* a prescription for the kind of society that is to be lived on earth. Thus, the fact that all our God-language and imagery is male convinces us every time we speak that language that it is the natural order of things that males be in control.

So in the same breath in which I come to a congregation to announce that the broader significance of my ordination as a rabbi is an invitation to all the women in the community to consider themselves equal partners in Judaism, I must raise the very obvious question that as women open the *siddur* (prayerbook), they will see a message that at some level contradicts that invitation to equality.

Most recently I've become aware of a very serious theological problem: To conceptualize God as male and to mean it literally—not just to simply use the language as metaphor because of the poverty of our religious imagination—can only be called idolatrous in terms of Jewish theology.

LILITH: You spoke of your commitment to the *halacha* and tradition. When did this begin for you?

EILBERG: I come from a Conservative family, one very strongly identified as Jews on an ethnic and cultural level; *halacha* and ritual observance were not a primary concern in our home. We went to *shul* every now and then—always on the High Holy Days. I went to Hebrew school, lit candles Friday night, had a Bat Mitzvah as a matter of course.

When I was 14, I went on a United Synagogue Youth—USY-on-wheels summer program—a 6½-week cross-country tour. It was my first experience with the traditional Jewish lifestyle: we *davened* (prayed) three times a day, and observed Shabbat very strictly, kept kosher very strictly, in all sorts of very odd places. That was a watershed point in my life. From then on, I got progressively more observant of various *mitzvot* (commanded actions). I started to take my Jewish education much more seriously. By the time I entered college, I knew I wanted to be a Jewish educator.

LILITH: What touched you about this experience and made it so important?

EILBERG: I think it was the same two things that make it compelling for me now. One is the sense of connectedness with the faith community, both vertical and horizontal. Vertically, a sense of conection with an ancestral community—with millenia of ancestors—and a connection to the future. And a horizontal community, the community of Jews around the country and around the world with whom I had the sense that I had something special in common, as people who are working toward certain common goals and who share a past and a future.

The other element had to do with my sense of a system that addresses ultimate existential questions about one's place in the world and about God and the meaning of life. I had the sense—I still do—that ritual and liturgical activity represent a structured attempt to respond to some of those basic questions about life.

LILITH: What happened after high school?

EILBERG: In 1972, I went to Brandeis. The community was tremendously supportive of women's equality and women's aspirations. It was the dawn

(Photo: Myra Alperson)

of Jewish feminism. A very important feature of the community was Hillel Rabbi Al Axelrad—who took particular interest in helping women come into their own Jewishly.

When I got to Brandeis, the official service at the university had separate seating, no *mechitza* (partition between the sexes during prayer) but an aisle separating women and men, and no women's participation. The freshman class included a bunch of kids who had been in USY and Camp Ramah and some liberal Conservative congregations who were already calling women to the Torah. By the end of that year, we as a group had overturned the policy so that the official service of the university was an egalitarian one—traditional service with mixed seating and full participation by women.

In the spring of my freshman year (1973), the first National Jewish Women's Conference was held. My life was changed by that conference, which

Eilberg with fellow students at the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Rabbi David Cogan, Jewish Theological Seminary vice-chancellor, conferring degree on Eilberg. (Photo: Arnold Katz)

I did not even attend. When a friend told me that Rachel Adler had *davened* there with *tallit* (prayer shawl) and *tefillin* (phylacteries), this represented an answer to a question I had been asking.

I had come to Brandeis with a fairly strong traditionalist inclination, but also some feminist or at least egalitarian consciousness. But I did have the sense that the call for equality in the traditionalist Jewish community—by which I included the Conservative movement—would have to take into account the issue of obligation. For me, the blanket call for equality wasn't the whole story. Obligation, however you conceptualize it—from a personally commanding God or a sense of commandedness by God or in a Kaplanian sense of one's obligation to the community—was a concept that had to be factored into the discourse. . . . I was very much struck by the connection between the *halachic* exemption of women from a whole set of *mitzvot* and women's exclusion from certain roles in the community.

After learning about Adler's action, I decided that I would take on the obligations of *tallit* and *tefillin;* these being only an example of that series of *mitzvot* from which women are exempt. I said to myself—and the community—that I rejected the notion that I was exempt and therefore excluded from a certain set of central activities simply by being a woman, and that by my repudiation of the exemption status I had made myself into the type of woman that the *halacha* would *have* to see as an equal. It was at that point that I began to feel comfortable leading services, reading the Torah. I had a male friend teach me to put on *tefillin*, read, lead services. I began to teach other women to be *shlichot tzibur* (prayer leaders). Two years later I began to think of the rabbinate.

LILITH: Wasn't this at a time—1976—when the ordination of Conservative women seemed impossible?

EILBERG: The issue was really underground at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in those years; there was a sense of taboo about feminist issues in the mid-70s. . . . I entered the Jewish Theological Seminary's Master's program in Talmud; I loved Talmud, it wasn't a completely political agenda. . . . [But] the sense was that the more women who were there and who were known to be serious students and serious Jews, the more that would advance the eventuality of ordination.

In 1979, the JTS faculty voted to table the decision indefinitely. I felt such a sense of trauma and threat about the divisiveness of that decision that I believed it would be a generation until the vote would come up again. I said to myself, "Well, maybe someday I'll have a daughter and she'll have a chance, but

it may not happen in my lifetime." I was wrong!

I loved Talmud and ordination seemed far away. I began to think about an academic career and headed for a Ph.D in Talmud. When I'd finished almost all the requirements for the doctorate but the dissertation, I went through a period of soul-searching. I felt that I had originally wanted to be a rabbi because I wanted to be able to put together aspects of scholarship and the helping professions, and that I had developed one track but not the other. I still couldn't be a rabbi so I thought at least I would put together my own kind of rabbinical training program. At that point I did the MSW at Smith College. Two-thirds of the way through the program, the Seminary voted to admit women as rabbinical candidates, so I came back. . . .

I will be a rabbinic chaplain at Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis, and the community rabbi of the Jewish Welfare Federation there with some responsibilities in the area of education. It's not an accident that I am doing this while thinking about the ways of integrating womanhood and the rabbinate, and that I have chosen a position which is devoid of the showy, distant performance aspects of the rabbinate and very much oriented to intense, intimate people-work.

LILITH: Do you believe women have a different contribution to make to the rabbinate?

EILBERG: I hope very strongly that most of the women ordained at JTS will not feel that in order to achieve legitimacy in their own eyes and in the eyes of the community they will have to imitate male models of the rabbinate but will feel free to explore the connection between their womanhood and the rabbinate. I suspect that women, having been raised in a society or perhaps even being intrinsically inclined toward regarding issues of interdependence of relationships, of care, as primary, will, as rabbis practice a model of leadership that will be substantially facilitative, empowering, and cooperative.

I say this cognizant of the fact that in the Conservative movement, *halacha* is still an important guiding force, so that a completely democratic or egalitarian mode of decision-making is at least partly in conflict with the way the Conservative movement views *halacha*—there has to be an oligarchy of the most learned. I don't believe *halachic* decisions should be made by vote. I do believe *poskim* (religious arbiters) and rabbis have to listen very carefully to their congregations as I believe the best *poskim* always did.

LILITH: Which brings us to *halachic* reform. What are we going to do about *edut* (women's not being considered witnesses)?

EILBERG: I think this problem relates to one's basic understanding of what sort of system *halacha* is and how it has evolved over the centuries. The more right-wing position holds to an almost monolithic view of *halacha* as a completely unchangeable system. My view very clearly is that *halacha* has always been a changing system. Any legal system which can survive tremendous sociological changes must have internal mechanisms for change. The record shows that *halacha* contains such mechanisms.

We're in a different situation from the post-Emancipation era, in the 18th century, when it seemed to the leaders of the Jewish community that the walls were caving in; and their response was to rigidify and fossilize.

I think that the Conservative movement has resuscitated a more authentic notion of the possibility of internal development in the *halacha*. Its approach is one of defining parameters of the *halachic* process, rather than insisting that there is one single *halachic* answer to everything.

I've come to the conclusion, after many years of careful study of the issues in Jewish law, and familiarity with the particular approach represented by the Conservative movement, that *halacha* can adapt itself to the feminist challenge as defined in terms of equal access. I include the issues of *aliya*, *shaliach tzibur*, and *edut*—which I consider to be in the realm of the imperative in feminist terms and the realm of the possible in *halachic* terms for those who are willing to look for that positive answer.

LILITH: How far can *halacha* be stretched or changed until it breaks? How far can you move it to the point where it will not be *halacha* anymore?

EILBERG: It is the organism that can grow and breathe and shift and find different places to cultivate its growth that survives and flourishes. It's apathy toward the law that represents the greatest danger, not a continuing serious process of questioning and demanding and challenging and appropriating aspects of the system for personal meaning. . . .

In 1974, the Rabbinical Assembly's Committee on Law and Standards voted to consider it an acceptable mode of rabbinic practice to regard women as witnesses. That doesn't mean that all Conservative rabbis are bound by that decision, but that Conservative rabbis may choose between the traditional *halachic* option, that women may be witnesses, and the less traditional one.

It seems to me, too, that the *halachic* view of women's *edut* is not as monolithic as its proponents would suggest. There are cases in which the *halacha* itself sets forth a small, and yet, significant number of cases in which women are considered to be reliable witnesses. If we did some more serious thinking about the underlying principles that led rabbis to endorse these exceptions, we might feel more comfortable with the RA decision to widen that permissability to the reliability of *all* women as witnesses.

In the past decade, while many women studied Talmud at JTS, debate raged on ordaining women. (Photo: Alan S. Orling)

LILITH: What about the question of divorce?

EILBERG: In the Conservative movement, the *beit din* (law court) at the Seminary will call in the couple together if there's a problem in granting the divorce as per the prenuptial agreement, and attempt to persuade a recalcitrant husband or wife.

Eilberg with fellow students at the Jewish Theological Seminary. After the decision of October 1983 to admit women as rabbinical students, women in the first integrated entering class (1984-85) began to raise various issues such as setting up day care at JTS. (Photo: Alan S. Orling)

LILITH: But still it's the man who signs that document?

EILBERG: That's right.

LILITH: Is there any possibility of changing that? Why can't both sign the document . . .?

EILBERG: That would be the sort of change that could not be done from within the *halachic* system . . . There's no question that the system provides for the unilateral male granting of divorce. Much as that's uncomfortable and offensive to many of us, those of us who want to continue to work within a traditionalist framework to the extent that we can, have to recognize this and accept it. A woman initiating a divorce is a departure from *halacha*, and there are people who are willing to do that, and I can certainly understand why. I would not think that the Conservative movement would go in that direction.

LILITH: How can you have allegiance to a system which is totally designed by men and in many cases, such as divorce, is not particularly humane regarding women—women are regarded as property . . .?

EILBERG: For me, the question is: why blame those human authorities who created rabbinic Judaism for not having been able to anticipate what it took another 2,000 years for human society to develop? I do not fault those rabbis for not having understood contemporary feminism, although Jewish literature attributes to them a certain degree of divine inspiration. Rabbinic Judaism is a socio-religious construction put together by human beings, who with all of their wisdom and with all of their abilities to surpass that which was present in their societies, were, like all humans, culturally-bound to a certain extent. The fact that Judaism was created by men does not detract from the genius of the system, the compelling nature of the system . . . it does not alter my allegiance to the system.

LILITH: Do you think that if women become *poskim* they will address various issues, let's say divorce, in a different way?

EILBERG: I think that's an important thing we should be striving for. . . . There was a time when there was a great concern for women to join the ranks of the *poskim*. I'm now hearing more and more Jewish feminists who are saying that women might head toward *midrash* (interpretation of text)—toward creation of new liturgy and new rituals, new interpretive material on Biblical literature—rather than address their energies to the legal issues.

LILITH: Why is *midrash* important?

EILBERG: *Midrash* has always been the way in which communities who are historically detached from the founding documents established some connection between their own experiences and the generation in which the documents were created. Every generation would open the books, and in some cases they then re-read the old books, reinterpreted the old books in light of their new experience, created new books which built on the old, but incorporated their new experiences. That was always the *midrash*ic process. *Midrash* is really the classical Jewish way to continue to allow the old text to speak to a new situation.

Midrash is the process by which Jewish communities re-establish the link between themselves and the ancient texts. If you read the classic books of the *midrash*, you see the playfulness and the liberties that they take with the text. There's a freedom in that process which is probably helpful to our predicament as Jewish feminists today, without the imposition of the sort of strictures that we have when we want to look up an authoritative legal code.

LILITH: How do you feel about the growing trend of people writing new ceremonies?

EILBERG: It is just a marvelously positive phenomenon; an extraordinarily beautiful example of what I mean when I say that women now have to open up the old books and enter into a new relationship with them. Read the books

carefully with love, but with the courage to ask the hard question—"how does this speak to me? What's missing? Are there things I have to add?"

LILITH: The birth ceremonies and other ceremonies seem to be inclined toward celebrating, marking, accentuating something *biological*. People have written ceremonies about menopause or their first period, and it seems to me that Judaism doesn't mark biological events. Now, of course, Judaism may not have done that because women may not have been involved in it at that point; on the other hand, maybe it's against the spirit of Judaism. . . .

EILBERG: I'm not terribly troubled by that. There is the sense of "how can something so new be authentically Jewish?" And I think that as we, the community of women and men, go ahead in the next decades and generations in finding ways of fully incorporating women's experiences, continuing the interpretive process, we will have to keep asking that question, but not allow it to serve as a barrier against the creation of new devotional literature.

There is no ceremony, no liturgical material for menopause or for having a baby. I would agree with feminists who identify that as a lacuna in literature and attribute that gap to the fact that this literature was primarily addressed to the experiences of men. The *bris* is a celebration of a biological event in a certain sense. What is so interesting about it is that all the liturgy makes of it a social, religious and theological event more than a natural biological event.

The one thing that troubles me is the separatist implication of some of this new material. I am personally troubled and perplexed by the question of "where do we go from here?" in terms of the tension between women needing to celebrate their own uniqueness and their own special gifts, and the need to stay very much in touch with the whole community. I think that there is a need for certain kinds of separate women's celebrations, since we are still so close in history or perhaps even still in a situation in which the predominant social message is that male is good and that female is less. In that sense, women may have to spend time and energy alone in order to rediscover their own sense of value and legitimacy. Yet when male feminists ask, "why are you leaving us out, when will we be able to join the process, is this a temporary process and how will we rejoin you again at some point after you have found your own voice . . .?" I'm not sure any of us knows the answer.

LILITH: Isn't there a danger in celebrating and marking women's particular special experiences? It borders on the idea that there is a separate men's sphere and a separate women's sphere, which is something that the Orthodox (and right-wing) are always saying. . . .

(Photo: Myra Alperson)

EILBERG: In a sense, all of the new feminist talk about women's special gifts, women's unique psychological portrait, and women's particular form of experience comes very close to what in another time would simply have been called sexism, or the limitation of women. There was a time when talk about women's differentness was dangerous, the sense that if we feminists began to talk about women having a particular connection to nurturance and caring, we were afraid that men would come back with, "well, if you're such experts in nurturance, why don't you stay home and have children."

But it seems to me that now that we feel, more or less, that our equality is assured, we do have the liberty to raise those issues again. To remember what, in fact, we have always known . . . human society has always known . . . that there are some gender differences. . . . We can rediscover those differences and take a new look at them.

Throughout the '70s and until a year or two ago, my feminism was primarily of the civil libertarian variety—that is, the struggle for equal access to everything. Anything less than full equality is to me unacceptable in feminist or egalitarian terms. Now I am at the point—and the community is substantially at the point—at which equality is assured. I am feeling free in a way I wasn't before to explore issues relating to women's different contribution [to Judaism].

LILITH: What impact do you think your ordination will have on the community?

EILBERG: I think the decision of the Conservative movement to accept women represents the most powerful statement in favor of women that the movement could have made. The movement could have made pronouncements about believing in the equality of women, but it's when women are actually granted the same rights and privileges in the system and the same symbolic power and legitimacy as men have always had, that women in our country can say, "they really mean that we are to be accepted as partners and that our contributions are welcome."

I think that's why women have been so incredibly excited by the news of the Conservative movement's decision. The message has been sent out in a very clear way that women are being invited to take another step forward, to try to move more fully into the leadership of Federations, and other Jewish communal organizations, across the board, in religious and community life. I think that, in a sense, the leadership of the Conservative movement has sent out the invitation to women to rethink their relationship with the community. And I think women have heard that message.

There's a long-term process that has to evolve from now on, but the groundwork has been laid and I believe that progress will ensue. This is social change, and such changes come slowly. But as I look back at where we've come from—at the progress in the last 15 years—it's almost meteoric. ■

POETRY

My Daughter, The Rabbi by M. Zackheim

A MOST TRADITIONAL DENIAL

I wanted to wrap
my small arms
round the Torah
and parade with it
down every aisle
hugging the stories
of my past;
but you told me
that it was very heavy
and besides,
that was the
Rabbi's job.

And when
after the Sabbath meal
we'd start to stack dishes
in the candles' honey glow
you'd insist
that I
quickly
blow
them
out.

Mother,
why did you want
me to be Jewish?
My
nine-year-old eyes
begged you
for a Bat-Mitzvah
for I remembered
my brother's proud voice
chanting
in Hebrew
the secret words
of Torah.
Why did you tell me
that I needn't bother?

I wanted to daven
with the men
in the silky white tallit
and sing psalms from
the deep center of my heart
I wanted to dance
in the warm circles
of the Hassidim
and later
study commentary
with scholars
under the trees.

Tonight
you stand by the windowsill
plucking out the
young
coleus
Mother, I speak to you of Leah,
Rebekah, Sara, and
Rachel, foremothers of
our tradition,
you smile with muddy fingers

and ask me for a
handtowel.

—Devorah Harris

DEVORAH HARRIS is the Youth Director at Adath Jeshurun Synagogue in Minneapolis, where the snow never stops giving her poetic inspiration. Devorah is a founding mother of Northwords Women, past board member for The Loft (A Place For Literature and The Arts), and she has published in many journals including: FallOut, Ragmag, Womanspirit, *and in the National Council of Teachers of English publications.*

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BOOK REVIEWS

CHALLENGING WOMEN TO INFLUENCE THE JEWISH LAWS THAT GOVERN OUR LIVES

***Women and Jewish Law* by Rachel Biale. Schocken Books, 1984. 293 pp.**

Reviewed by Beverly Gribetz

The question of women's role in Judaism has been approached passionately from all sides. Now Rachel Biale has succeeded in offering a lucid and dispassionate account of some of the major issues as they are represented in *halacha* (Jewish law).

Her book is well-researched and displays the pedagogue's ability to translate difficult concepts and convoluted arguments into the language of the lay reader. In a year in which the discourse on this subject has deteriorated to sectarian politics, *Women and Jewish Law* can serve to raise the debate back up to where it belongs, on the plane of *halachic* dialectic and quest for knowledge.

Biale has concentrated on the areas of *halacha* that fall under the general heading of *dinei ishut*—the laws regulating personal status through matrimony. The chapter headings include women and the *mitzvot* (commanded actions), marriage, divorce, the *agunah* ("anchored wife"), sexuality and marital relations, *niddah* (menstruation), sexuality outside of marriage, procreation and contraception, abortion, and rape.

The great contribution of her book may be to move the English-reading public to acknowledge that *these* are the issues that often cause real pain and suffering to individuals, and that are often "resolved" by individuals without reference to the Jewish tradition because of their seeming intractability. These are the issues that may affect the future of *Klal Yisrael* (the total Jewish community) because of the doubts they will cast on future marriages—even more crucial a matter than the public, ceremonial issues—such as ritual observance, prayer, synagogue participation, and Torah study—which Biale treats in her first chapter.

The one significant problem area for Jewish women that is missing from this book is *edut*—testimony—which touches on many other issues, such as contracts, inheritance, law courts, and the functioning of women rabbis.

Biale is very careful to retain *halacha* as the focus of her discussion. While she does not profess a consistently Orthodox approach and does argue implicitly for change, she is not irreverent. This is particularly important at a time when it is often perceived as difficult to integrate the *halachic* process with a theology that sees our generation and its new concerns as discontinuous with traditional, normative Judaism.

The author's favorite phrase is "balancing act," and she does it well. Her tone is non-polemical, and her consistent interpretation of *machloket*, or learned controversy in *halacha*, as a tension between two legitimate sets of values—for instance, the primacy of procreation vs. the hazards of childbirth; or the assumption that men controlled sexual relations while women needed rights and protection—bespeaks an authentic search for the conceptual bases of Jewish law, often missing in works of this genre.

Many of the questions Biale raises are important: What is the "real" meaning of "acquiring a woman in marriage"? Do women who assume the obligation of *mitzvot* from which they are legally exempt share an equal status with men who are explicitly commanded?

Some of Biale's insights are provocative, for example, her interpretation of the fundamental transformation of the laws of *niddah* from a connection to impurity in the arena of public cultic life to the arena of private family life, where they became attached to the laws regarding sexual transgressions.

As a semi-popular exposition that necessarily reviews the standard works, *Women and Jewish Law* makes the scholarly literature, including important works in Hebrew, accessible. A major use for this book will be as a starting-point for further research, and as a background text for courses in Women's Studies and in Jewish Law.

Biale presents us with the important primary sources and explicates them in a fashion that is usually clear and systematic. In some of the chapters, however, she appears to be relying too much on the selections and interpretations of other authors cited in the copious notes. One would want to see the sources in their original contexts in order to uncover other layers of meaning.

My major criticism of this book is its title. It is time to acknowledge that none of these are solely women's issues. Biale's challenge to women to begin to influence the *halacha* that governs their lives is well-taken.

She criticizes, at least implicitly, the entire community that has stopped even dreaming of the consensus that might make it possible to use the halachic tools of *takkana* and *cherem* (post-Talmudic rabbinic legislation and excommunication).

This criticism must be taken seriously by men, too. The problems addressed here are human problems, and the search for their solutions, admirably advanced by Biale's work, should be furthered in that context.

BEVERLY GRIBETZ is a doctoral candidate in education at the Jewish Theological Seminary. She lives in Jerusalem, where she teaches Talmud at the Pelech Religious High School for Girls, and coordinates the Jewish Values Project of the Melton Center for Jewish Education in the Diaspora of the Hebrew University.

Lawrence Bush

"THIS IS WHAT MAKING HISTORY FEELS LIKE"

***Bessie* by Lawrence Bush. Seaview/Putnam, 1983. 426 pp.**
***In My Mother's House* by Kim Chernin. Harper Colophon, 1984. 309 pp.**

Reviewed by Julia Wolf Mazow

Bessie, Lawrence Bush's novel based upon the life of his grandmother, Bessie Sainer, and Kim Chernin's *In My Mother's House*, based primarily upon the life of her mother, Rose Chernin, are stories of women for whom ideas mattered, who believed their actions could make a difference.

Both were born in small villages in Russia; both experienced great joy, hardship, and personal loss; both came to the U.S., joined the Communist Party, and worked hard for it.

Although these books—and the lives of Chernin and Sainer—differ in important ways, they describe a shared commitment. Bessie Sainer tells her grandson:

> The most important thing in my life has been the revolutionary movement, even since I was a young child without understanding. I must have been born that way, feeling that I was

JULIA WOLF MAZOW, Fiction Editor of Lilith, *teaches women's fiction and autobiography at the University of Houston. She compiled and edited* The Woman Who Lost Her Names: Selected Writings of American Jewish Women *(Harper and Row, 1980).*

BOOK REVIEWS

Kim Chernin

> with the downtrodden, with the people that suffer . . . . Sooner or later you have to start thinking about it . . . . And it's so easy for you to become a revolutionary if you think.

Similarly, Rose Chernin tells her daughter, "You wonder, maybe, why I became a Communist. But I used to wonder why everyone did not." And in the epilogue to *In My Mother's House*, Kim says of Rose to her daughter, Larissa: "There are hundreds of people who would have been jailed or deported if it weren't for her . . . . Maybe she's been able to do what she's done because she believes so strongly in something."

Bessie's story begins with her birth in 1895 in the village of Mogilev-Podolsk in Czarist Russia. We learn little about her mother; her father, we're told, was a rabbi, a yeshiva scholar.

When Bessie's two older brothers become involved in anti-Czarist activities, she helps them. Although 12-year-old Bessie confesses to nothing, she is sent to Siberia, which, she says, makes her even more revolutionary: "It's like you put beans in a dark closet and they sprout."

During her four years in Siberia, Bessie learns how strong women can be, chiefly from the example of Babushka Breshkovskya, "the grandmother of the revolution," who helped establish the Socialist Revolutionary Party. Babushka teaches Bessie an important lesson in survival: "If we're given guns, we make revolution with guns. If we're given only snow and sick women, then we work with them."

After Siberia, Bessie goes to England and then the U.S., where she works at the Triangle Waist Company. She leaves the job with the encouragement of Yasha, a member of the International Workers of the World, who introduces her to the politics of American workers and becomes the love of her life as well as her first husband.

The two go to the Soviet Union to work (she is a nurse) after the 1917 Revolution. Bessie is shot, and both Yasha and their baby daughter die in the civil war. Returning to the U.S. pregnant with their second daughter, Janet, many a night she falls asleep counting the lives of those she had lost.

During the McCarthy era, Bessie flees underground for a time. In her sixties she becomes a civil rights activist, and is involved in the peace movement during the Vietnam War.

Bessie resigns from the Party in 1975, and she makes it clear that her resignation means she is leaving dogmatism behind, not her ideas. Nevertheless, the effect on her is devastating, as it is one more loss.

Bessie's radical involvement and her membership in the Communist Party are the subjects that recur most often in her story. Years later, Bessie can still say of that time:

> It was like we were at the very center of life. We had our lives in our own hands, and the regular problems that keep you busy every day were completely gone. You feel clear, so sure about what you're doing. Every breath you take is, like, conscious, aware, you know that you're breathing. This is what making history feels like.

Kim Chernin's *In My Mother's House* is about four women—her mother, Rose Chernin; her grandmother, Perle; her daughter, Larissa—and herself. "My mother . . . was obsessed by the fate of her mother, and this obsession has descended to me," she writes.

In 1974, Rose proposed that Kim write her life story. In doing so, Kim knows she takes in her hands "a gift of fire," which she accepts with loving caution and courage. "I must keep it alive," she warns herself; "I must manage not to be consumed by it."

In My Mother's House tells the life-story of Rose Chernin, who was the first person in America the U.S. government tried—unsuccessfully—to denaturalize and deprive of citizenship. But although Rose's 1951 arrest for "forming a conspiracy to overthrow the government" is an important chapter in her life, it is not the only one. Just as vivid is the story of Rose's childhood in Russia, where she was born in 1903.

We see her arriving in America at age eleven, working and educating herself, marrying Paul Kusnitz, becoming a lifelong, committed Communist and party organizer, returning with Paul to the U.S.S.R. in 1932—he to work on the design of the Moscow subway, she to work for the State Publishing House—and later, living in California. We also see her as mother to two daughters, Kim and Nina, who was older by eleven years and died of Hodgkin's Disease in 1946.

But a summary of events in the life of its subjects does not do justice to this book, for it is also about guilt, abandonment, and despair, about loss and, then, the renewal of hope. It includes raging quarrels about Communism, Kim's disenchantment with it, the terrible silences of Rose's withdrawal after Nina's death, and Kim's confusion—and sense of loss—when Rose spends six months in jail.

The style of the book is descriptive and meditative, and parts of it read more like poetry than prose. Interspersed throughout are present-tense encounters, confrontations between Rose and Kim, responses to the story told in preceding chapters, and foreshadowings of what will come. In Kim Chernin's hands, these encounters are emotional links between past and present, threads that connect anger, forgiveness, and the stirrings of reconciliation.

Writing the book takes seven years, and even before she begins, Kim realizes that it will force Rose and her "to face all the secrets and silences we have kept." She fears, "as any daughter would, losing myself back into the mother"—a statement reflected in Rose's memories: "Always I struggled. Never to be like Mama. Never like that poor, broken woman."

In 1958, Kim returns from the 7th World Youth Festival in Moscow, disillusioned with Communism and disturbed by her glimpse of the situation of Soviet Jewry. She announces that she is a poet, not a political person, and Rose says, "That's all we need, another poet, and the world at the edge of a holocaust." After telling Perle's story, however, Rose realizes that in her poet-feminist daughter, Perle's "great spirit has another chance at life."

The moment finally arrives when the breach between the two women "heals over," the silences are comforting, and both are "touched by a single motion of forgiveness."

The moment is a long time coming, it's hard-won, and it's worth waiting for. Many mothers and daughters never reach it.

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WOMAN AS JEW, JEW AS WOMAN

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LILITH REPRINT SERVICE

In response to the demand for articles in out-of-print issues of LILITH, we are making available reprints of several outstanding articles of particular importance.

THE JEWISH STAKE IN ABORTION RIGHTS
by Annette Daum
No Jew would be able to adhere to Jewish law on abortion, which allows the termination of pregnancies under varying circumstances, if the right-wing assault on freedom of choice and on the Constitution is allowed to succeed.

"In a *coma!* I thought she was *Jewish!*" Some truths and speculations about Jewish women and sex
by Susan Weidman Schneider
There are countless jokes about how sexually "unresponsive" Jewish women supposedly are. Who's laughing—and why?

Raising Kids Jewish in an Intermarriage
Testimonies by Sharon Lieberman, Zahava Jacobson, William Bly, Eileen Berry-Harahan and Inge Lederer Gibel

Advice to grandparents
by Helen Latner
By the best estimates, of every three marriages involving a Jew, at least one will be to a non-Jewish partner. While many bemoan this trend, prevention and "cure" seem equally impossible and undesirable in an open society. Five Jews who have married non-Jews tell here how they're raising children with strong Jewish identities even under these complicated circumstances.

Evaluating a Decade of Jewish Feminism: An interview with Paula Hyman and Arlene Agus
A group of women calling themselves Ezrat Nashim (help for women) set forth the earliest agenda for the nascent Jewish feminist movement in 1972. Now, more than a decade after the group's landmark petition challenging the Conservative movement to expand women's rights, and ten years after the Reform movement ordained its first woman rabbis, two leaders of Ezrat Nashim reveal why it's taking so long to realize the promise of those events.

The Lilith Question
by Aviva Cantor
In search of the real Lilith—it's time for Jewish women to deal with the contradictions of the myth and reclaim Lilith's essential nature.

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TSENA-RENA

GROUPS AND PROJECTS

The Women's Tefillah Network is an umbrella organization of Orthodox women's prayer groups in the New York metropolitan area. For more information about WTN, contact:

Rivkeh Haut
852 East 13th Street
Brooklyn NY
or
Judy Bernstein
1332 Taft Road
Teaneck, N.J. 07666

The Coalition for Western Women's History plans to hold a conference in 1986 on "Women's West: Race, Class and Culture," billed by organizers as "deeply and firmly—not tokenly—multi-cultural and multi-racial." Jewish women are invited to join the Coalition, participate in a Jewish interest group, and attend the conference. For information on all these, write:

Sue Armitage
Coalition for Western Women's History
c/o Women's Studies,
Washington State University
Pullman WA 99164

DRAMA AND FILM

The American Jewish Theatre has launched a theatre group for Jewish women writers, known as the Deborah Project. The group plans the development of new plays, monthly one-woman shows and "a marathon" of one-act plays. For further information, call:

Susan Nanus, Coordinator
(212) 427-6000, ext. 220

The Creative Theater, devoted to the development of educational theater in Israel, performs original works, most focusing on issues in contemporary Israeli life. A recent production, "Through Five Windows," describes the experiences of five Israeli women—one a native Israeli and four who are newly arrived settlers—focusing on their very different backgrounds, motivations and adjustments to their new situations. It is now available on videotape. For more information, contact:

JWB Jewish Lecture Bureau
15 East 26th Street
New York NY 10010
(212) 532-4949

Lilly Rivlin, whose documentary, *The Tribe*, was recently shown at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, is presently working on "Women's Rituals," a 27-minute documentary that includes: a *Tashlich* ceremony developed by E.M. Broner and Lilly Rivlin; a Feminist Seder created by Broner; and a female naming ceremony created by Rabbi Julie Gordon and her husband, Rabbi Jonathan Ginsberg. Rivlin is seeking completion funds for this film. For further information, write:

L. Rivlin
Women's Rituals
c/o Lilith Magazine
250 West 57th Street
Suite 1328
New York NY 10019

Among the current Cinema Guild film and video releases is "Abortion: Stories from North and South," a cross-cultural documentary of the abortion issue; and "Rape/Crisis," an award-winning docudrama on the roots of sexual violence in our culture. For further information, contact:

The Cinema Guild
1697 Broadway
New York NY 10019
(212) 246-5522

CULTURAL MATERIALS

A six-cassette series of 13 lectures entitled "The Jewish Woman in History and Literature" by Dr. Paula Hyman, Dean of the Seminary College of Jewish Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary, is available from The Jewish People's University of the Air, an educational outreach program of Touro College and its Herzliah-Jewish Teachers Seminary Division. The series is one of 15 cassette "courses" put out by Touro, all of which include outlines, suggested reading lists and instructions for use. The cassette series may be ordered, for $39.95, from:

Jewish People's University of the Air
30 West 44th Street
New York NY 10036

Lois Diamond's company, *Tirtzah*, manufactures *talitot* (prayer-shawls) for women. The *talitot* are available from:

Tirtzah
Box 220
Guilderland NY 12084

Helaine Victoria Press has published four new postcards featuring women in American Jewish history. Two cards honor individual women: immigrant writer Mary Antin and pioneer publisher Ross Sonnenschein; one card features the founders of the National Council of Jewish Women; and a fourth has a photograph documenting the 1909 Shirtwaist Makers Uprising in New York City, which was spearheaded by Jewish women workers. Each card includes a short biography of the woman on the cover, as well as historical information. (The first three cards were researched by Sue Elwell, and the fourth by Jocelyn Cohen.) The new cards are available individually, or as part of a set of 16 cards on Jewish women writers, activists and thinkers ($7 for the set). Order from:

"Go and See" or "Seek Enlightenment" is the title of the Yiddish-language Torah for women, with the portion of the week and folk tales. Tsena-Rena was the first resource that enabled women to educate themselves.

Helaine Victoria Press
Dept. JR
4080 Dynasty Lane
Martinsville Indiana 46151

Tapes of various keynote addresses and workshop sessions from a 1984 Los Angeles conference entitled, "Illuminating the Unwritten Scroll: Women's Spirituality and Jewish Tradition" are available from:

Infomedix
12800 Garden Grove Blvd.
Suite E
Garden Grove, Cal. 92643
(714) 530-3454

PUBLICATIONS

The results of a national survey systematically comparing the views of American Jewish and non-Jewish women on family, work and public policy, have recently been released by B'nai B'rith Women. The survey, entitled, "Beliefs and Values of American Jewish Women," indicates that Jewish women are less traditional than non-Jewish women about the role of women in our society—for example, they are much more accepting of working women as good mothers. Copies are available from:

B'nai B'rith Women
Program Services and
Public Affairs Department
1640 Rhode Island Avenue NW
Washington DC 20036
(Please enclose a 9x12 envelope with your request)

The *Annotated Guide to Women's Periodicals In the U.S. & Canada* lists over 250 publications and reviews each one. To order a copy or copies contact:

Annotated Guide
c/o N.S.I.W.S.
Bx. E-94
Earlham College
Richmond IN 47374

The Jewish Observer, a monthly magazine published by Agudath Israel of America, recently devoted an entire issue to "The Jewish Woman," from an Orthodox perspective. Articles addressed women's personal spiritual growth, sense of community, "place in Torah study," role as "transmitter of the Torah heritage," and response to the challenge of feminism. Copies may be obtained for $2 from:

Agudath Israel of America
5 Beekman St.
New York NY 10038

The American Jewish Committee's William Petschek National Jewish Family Center has published a booklet, "Genetic Engineering and the Family, Promise or Peril?", dealing with Jewish perspectives on the issue. For a copy write:

Morton Yarmon
American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York NY 10022

For information on discrimination against females within the criminal justice system, or on the National Council of Jewish Women's program dealing with child abuse, contact:

National Council of Jewish Women
15 E. 26 St.
New York NY 10011

GRANTS

The National Foundation for Jewish Culture has announced a grants program for publication of scholarly books in Jewish studies. Four awards, of a maximum of $5,000 each, will be presented annually to help young scholars publish a first book if funding is lacking. For more information, contact:

Academic Affairs Dept.
National Foundation for Jewish Culture
122 East 42nd Street
New York NY 10168
(212) 490-2280

The Feinsod Herz Fund welcomes funding proposals from Israeli non-profit tax-exempt organizations. For information contact:

Roger J. Herz
The Feinsod Herz Fund
PO Box 171
New York NY 10028

The Fellowships in Jewish Educational Leadership program (FIJEL) of the Jewish Education Service of North America sponsors two programs for individuals seeking careers in Jewish education: the FIJEL Intern-Fellow Program; and its Administrators' Training Program. For more information, write:

Jewish Education Service
of North America
730 Broadway
New York NY 10003

CALLS FOR MATERIAL

The Jewish Women's Resource Library, a project of the Los Angeles Section, National Council of Jewish Women, is both a resource center and a circulating library of books and unpublished materials on Jewish women. Contributions of material are welcome and may be sent to:

Shoshana Hirsh, Staff Consultant
The Jewish Women's Resource Library
543 North Fairfax Ave.
Los Angeles CA. 90036
(213) 651-2930

The New Women's Information Center of Na'amat Jerusalem will be housed at Na'amat Hachevra, 10 Shalom Aleichem Street, Jerusalem. The Center's library and resource files will provide information on all facets of Jewish women's lives, in various languages. Contributions are welcome. Contact:

The Women's Information Center
Na'amat Jerusalem
17 Strauss Street
Jerusalem
(02) 244-878 or (02) 221-631

The Program for the Study of Women and Men in Society is calling for scholars in all fields to submit papers which either reflect or utilize the perspectives of new research in men's studies, for an anthology. Deadline: December 1, 1985. Contact:

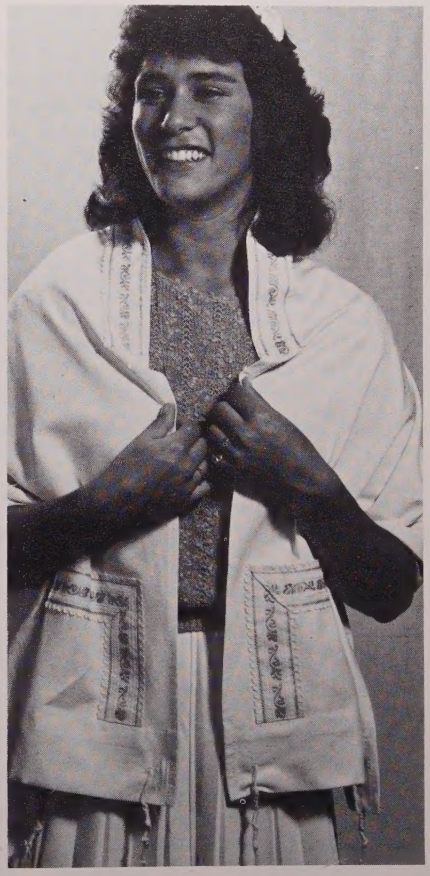
Harry Brod
Program for the Study of Women
and Men in Society
Taper Hall 331M
University of Southern California
Los Angeles CA. 90089-4352

Editors of *Arc*, an English-language literary magazine published by the Israel Association of Writers, are soliciting submissions for the next edition. Material (prose and poetry) must be written originally in English by writers living in Israel, and must be previously unpublished. The magazine may be obtained, for $2.50 including postage (or the shekel equivalent) from:

The Israel Association of Writers
in English
4 Rehov Nathan
Ramat Gan Israel 52435

Submissions are sought for a Lag B'omer anthology, to include poetry, plays short stories, and drawings. Material dealing with "women sages and heroines" is of particular interest. Previously published work will be considered. Send submissions to:

Judith Shulamith Langer Caplan
27 W. Penn Street
Long Beach NY 11561



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KOL ISHAH

(continued from p. 6)

ments, left behind when the Russian consulate in the U.S. was closed following the 1917 Russian Revolution, were discovered by chance in the 1970's at a storage center of the National Archives.

Indexing of the documents is well underway; the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Washington has recently sought contributions from Jewish Federations in several cities to complete the project. The Society anticipates that when it is finished, individuals in search of their family's past will be able to scan a printed index for names of people whose case files are in the collection. Microfilmed documents will be available at the National Archives, as well as Mormon libraries throughout the country. (JTA)

APPOINTMENTS

Eighteen women were ordained as rabbis last spring—including the first woman to be ordained by the Conservative movement (*see page 3*)—bringing the number of women ordained since 1973 to a total of 110.

Graduated from the Reform movement's Hebrew Union College-Jewish Insitute of Religion (in Cincinnati and New York) were: **Lauri Ellen Coskey** of Beverly Hills CA; **Rachel Conrad Hertzman** of Louisville; **Karyn Schwartz Kedar** of Baltimore; **Carissa Natalie Kranes** of Cincinnati; **Julie Ringold Spitzer** of Jacksonville FL; **Susan Gail Warshell** of Highland Park IL; **Judith Ida Zabarenko** of Rockford, IL; **Barbara Elka Abrahamson** of St. Paul; **Marla Feldman** of Toledo; **Dayle Friedman** of Denver; **Linda Henry** of New York City; and **Barbara Goldman-Wartell** of Evanston, IL.

Graduated from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College were: **Sandra Berliner** of Toledo; **Deborah Brin** of Minneapolis; **Bonnie Goldberg** of Brooklyn; **Andrea Gouze** of The Bronx; and **Vivian Schirn** of Los Angeles.

Barbara Ostfeld-Horowitz, Cantor of Temple Beth El in Great Neck NY, celebrated the tenth anniversary of her investiture as the Reform movement's first woman cantor. The occasion was marked at HUC-JIR's 1985 ordination and investiture ceremonies in June.

Nancy Leavitt, elected to a second term as president of the Worcester Jewish Federation.

Jacqueline Levine of West Orange NJ, elected to a third term as chair of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council.

Jane Sherman of Detroit, "co-chairman" of the Project Renewal Committee of the Jewish Agency for Israel, appointed "National Chairman" for the UJA's Project Renewal.

Pearl Stahl, named Director of the American Red Magen David for Israel.

Ethel Taft of Los Angeles, named President-elect, Conference of Jewish Communal Service.

Peggy Tishman, President of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, named President-elect of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of Greater New York.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Senda Abbott became the first Jewish woman enshrined in the Basketball Hall of Fame. Abbott, known as "The Mother of Women's Basketball," wrote the official rules for the game in 1892.

Rachel Biale, author of *Women and Jewish Law*, received the Kenneth Smilen Award for pioneering work by a woman.

Claire Epstein of Kibbutz Ginnossar, won the Schimmel Award for Archeology, presented by the Israel Museum at a special ceremony.

Barbara W. Tuchman, historian and author, received an Honorary Doctor of Letters from the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Mierle Laderman Ukeles, an artist, was awarded a one-year fellowship by the Guggenheim Memorial Foundation.

Awarded National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships for Creative Writers (each worth $20,000): **Jessica L. Auerbach** of Ridgefield CT; **Joyce Kornblatt** of Bethesda, MD; **Tova Reich** of Chevy Chase MD; **Lynn Sharon Schwartz** of New York NY.

OBITUARIES

ISAACA ZELDA SIEGEL—On January 31, 1985, our feminist community lost one of its most devoted workers, Isaaca Zelda Siegel, who died at the age of 47 after a brave battle with cancer for several months.

Isaaca was a supporter and friend of LILITH magazine, especially in its early years, giving us the benefit of her enormous knowledge in the areas of mechanics and distribution. She was also one of the founders of *Majority Report*, New York City's first feminist newspaper.

Isaaca was a fount of knowledge about the women's movement—citywide, nationwide and worldwide—and women constantly called upon her to share her vast networks of information. Her strong sense of leadership and respect was a cohesive force in the women's community, and her spontaneous sense of humor and quick wit often alleviated tensions among women in the organizations in which she worked. She never sought honor or glory for herself, but employed her outstanding qualities for the benefit of others.

To say that Isaaca will be missed is not adequate to convey our deep sense of loss. Modest, humble, softspoken, Isaaca Siegel will surely stand out as a "queenpin" when the true history of the past decade in the woman's movement is written.

—Batya Bauman

DR. NAOMI KIES, Hebrew University political scientist and activist, died of cancer in Jerusalem on May 4. She was three months short of her 44th birthday.

No one who knew Naomi Kies will easily forget her; she was a real presence in the world. "A symbol of the rise and fall of the Israeli Left," said one newspaper headline. Her life was intimately intertwined with the social, ethnic and labor politics that took place in Jerusalem over the past 15 years.

But perhaps she was most identified with the Black Panther movement of Israel. Colleagues at the Hebrew University and Black Panthers themselves admitted that it was Naomi Kies who gave the angry revolt of North African youth from Jerusalem's underprivileged Musrara Quarters their ideological backbone. Drawing these alienated youth into the political sphere so that their energy and lives were not wasted, she understood that through action there is meaning.

I first met Naomi in pre-1967 Jerusalem at the home of a mutual friend. Having come from the heady atmosphere of the American campus scene of the '60's where authentic human revolution seemed possible, we shared an impatience with an Israel still deep into the socially conservative values of the '50's.

I finally left Israel in frustration but Naomi dug into the fabric of her adopted country.

When I came back to Israel in the spring of 1971 to write a story about the Panthers, I found Naomi strategizing and advising in the background, sometimes joining them in actions and occasionally personally financing expenditures when necessary. (But once, at a vast demonstration when they burned Golda in effigy (nude and sprouting wings), she was livid: "Only fascists burn books and images," she said, according to Avi Katzmann in *Koteret Rashit* [Headline].)

One of the forerunners of Arab-Israeli dialogue, Naomi knew many of the West Bank leaders. Thus when Fahed Kawasme, a former West Bank Mayor, was murdered several months ago and the Israeli left was bogged down in discussing who should form a delegation, Naomi took the initiative and drove to Hebron to extend her condolences to the family.

Kawasme's brother came to her funeral, as did other mourners from all over—professors, political leaders, Panthers, neighborhood activists, Palestinians, feminists, mothers with their babies—one person even came with his cat.

Over the years Naomi had chided me for putting most of my energy into the feminist movement; not that she was not a feminist, but her commitment was to left electoral politics. Nonetheless, she bequeathed her entire wardrobe to the Shelter for Battered Women and her inheritance to the furtherance of the causes of women and peace.

Contributions in her name can be directed to the New Israel Fund (111 W. 40 St. NY NY 10018), on whose board she served. The Fund will be coordinating a project in her memory.

–Lilly Rivlin

"BARBARA'S BENCH"

Friends of the late anthropologist-author Barbara Myerhoff—whose *Number Our Days*, an account of the senior citizen community in Venice CA (*reviewed in issue #7*) won wide acclaim—are raising funds to purchase a public bench in her memory for the beachfront site of the Israel Levin Senior Center. Myerhoff died in January, 1985.

Project developer Lauren W. Deutsch said the support of Los Angeles County and the Bay Cities Jewish Community Center, affiliated with the senior center which Myerhoff researched, was easily obtained.

"The bench is a symbol of the vitality of these seniors, their culture and is a durable legacy for the future," she said. Myerhoff had commented on "bench behavior" in her book, noting its uses as a meeting place, a story-telling site, and a station from which the seniors could be part of the active community.

Tax-deductible contributions and information requests should be sent to BCJCC-Barbara's Bench, 2601 Santa Monica Blvd., Santa Monica CA 90404.

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THE JEWISH WOMEN'S MAGAZINE

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